



Night Wing

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- My Little Pony: Friendship is Magic
- Princess Celestia
- Princess Luna
- Other
- Romance
- Gore
- Starswirl the Bearded
- Adventure
- Human
- Alternate Universe

Description

A human wakes up in the everfree before the events of nightmare moon. Or adult Luna and Celestia. Oh, and he's a bird. A magical bird, but still a bird.

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Waking Up

Author's Notes:

Welcome reader! This is Nightwing, my first real story. The first few chapters are pretty bad, I won't lie. Looking back, they are definitely amateurish. But, I like to think they get better later on. Hope you all enjoy!

As my body slowly woke up I immediately noticed something wrong. It was too dark. I always left the closet light on. And crinkly. Since when did my bed crinkle? I rolled around and moved my arm to brush the crinkly stuff from under my back. Or I tried to. I grimaced as my arm didn't listen to me. *Come on, just move* I encouraged my arm. It still wouldn't move. I groaned as I opened my eyes to see what was keeping my arm from moving. What I saw surprised me greatly.

I wasn't in my house anymore. *Ooooooooooh my goooooood*. I frantically whipped my head around, trying to find out where I was. It was when my head continued past the point it was supposed to for the fourth time that I noticed. And it did nothing to alleviate my panic. I carefully turned my head as far as it would go to the right. Then the left. Turns out I could turn my head all the way backwards now...and look at my not human back. My back was covered in....space? *No, not space. Feathers....that look like space?* I noticed something sticking out between my eyes where my nose should be. Crossing my eyes I discovered it was a beak. A pitch black hawk beak. On my face. I faced forwards and looked down. Scared to find anything else wrong, but unable to stop looking. My front was covered in space feathers as well. *it looks like a window into space* I thought as I stared intently at my chest.

As I watched, a shooting star shot across my feathers. Too frozen with disbelief to react, I tracked the star across my body. Across my chest and down my wing. I opened my wing to watch as the trail of space dust reached the tip of my wing and came back up the

underside. *Wing?* looking even further down my body revealed pitch black talons with wickedly sharp nails.

A pine cone landed on the leaf cover ground next to me. Startled, I took note of my surroundings. I was in a dark forest filled with giant trees. *No, not giant. Normal sized. I'm just small.* Moonlight shown through the canopy in silvery streams that barely lit up the ground. Yet I could see fine.

My wings ruffled in agitation. I glanced at them before looking back up into the trees. *I swore I saw someth- There!* A flash of green drew my attention. I narrowed my eyes at the spot I saw it. Suddenly two green dots appeared in front of me. Just floating there. *What is tha-?* Teeth filled my Vision as something leapt from the trees.

“KEEEEEEEAR!!!” I shrieked in surprise. Luckily, the wooden wolf in front of me surprised me more than the sound that escaped my beak. The wooden beast snarled at me from where it landed. “Tsee!!” I tried to yell in fear. However, all I got was bird noises. The wolf lunged once more and I cowered on the ground. All I could focus on were the giant teeth headed my way. The needle sharp, saliva dripping maw coming to consume me. And coming. And coming. And.....*im not dead?* Hearing whimpering I looked out from under my wing. All I saw was the tail of the beast running into the woods. ‘HAH!! Yeah, get outta here!!’ Was what I tried to yell at it. Instead what came out was “KEEEEEAR!!!”

As the Adrenaline left my body my head sagged. It slowly drifted down to look at my chest. “KEEEEEEEAR” I shrieked yet again. Instead of space feathers I was greeted by rows upon rows upon rows of teeth fading into a dark abyss. I threw my head under my wing only to see a hateful glowing green eye. That was the last thing I saw before I passed out.

Waking up for the second time was better than the first. Firstly, it was morning. The forest was much less unsettling in the day. Secondly, I could think clearer. Any doubt of this being real was removed. And my mind was putting together pieces I didn't even know existed. *That was a Timber Wolf last night! But those aren't real. I must be dreaming but I'm not. The only explanation is too insane to accept.* Deciding to focus on something else, I tried to replicate what

I did last night. Somehow I had scared off that Timberwolf. And by gosh I needed every strength I could get right now. So I walked in a random direction while staring at my wings.

Hours past as I tried to change even a single death on my wings. To be honest, it was frustrating. To the point I was seeing red. *Come on!! Just change ONE feather!! ONE!!!!* Some bushes nearby rustled. I immediately thought of another timberwolf lying in wait. Panic flashed through me. *Dont see me!! Please! Why can't I be something more subtle than a giant space hawk!?* The bushes rustled more. And a rabbit jumped out. It looked around for a second before running off. Feeling like an idiot, I continued walking. Only to stop when I looked at my wings. They were wooden. Or they looked wooden anyways. In fact, the space theme I had going was replaced completely by tree bark. The feathers faded back to normal as I watched them intently. Once they where normal again I looked at a single feather and thought hard about the color blue. Amazingly it changed. One bright blue feather in the middle of space. All the hours of shouting magic words when the technique had been much simpler.

My stomach growled all of a sudden. And I stared in the direction the rabbit ran in. I was hungry. And as much as I hated to admit it, that rabbit looked delicious. I focused on my feathers and they all changed. Starting at the base of each feather and working up to the tips. I was wooden once again. I quickly left after the rabbit.

I saw my target. Mere feet away. I slowly crept up on it as it nibbled on grass. It didn't notice me as I got right behind it. Once close enough I lunged forward and sank my sharp beak into the rabbits neck. It didn't even know what hit it. I stared down at my kill before leaning down to eat it, only to stop when I noticed something odd. The rabbit had frostbite where the bite mark was. *Did I do that?* The skin around the bite was black, but everywhere else was fine. I hesitantly took a bite of the black spot. It was very cold, but it didn't seem to bother me in the slightest. It tasted fine. Diving in, I gorged myself. I noticed that it didn't turn black when I bit it anymore. *Maybe it's only when I try to hurt something?*

The bushes nearby rustled and I camouflaged myself without a

second thought. I stood still waiting to see what came out. There wasn't much of the rabbit left, but I didn't want to abandon it for nothing. To my surprise, a little.....pony came out. My heart dropped at the sight. *Well. That just confirms it. I'm in equestria.* What struck me as odd was the fact that this pony had a horn and wings. And was smaller than me by a good bit. *How big am I?* I wondered. This was obviously a filly. And it looked familiar. I just couldn't put my....talon on it. Why did it look so famil-*Woon*a? That was baby Luna!!

Little Luna

The filly looked around the clearing. Not seeing anything, her eyes teared up. She sniffled and sat on the ground looking totally lost. *But... Am I before the show? Before everything?* I watched as she began to cry. *Oh that's awful. Don't cryyyy.* She started to sob in front of me. *Uuuuuuh. What do I do!?* I was on an alien planet with a child crying in front of me. Never expected that. I awkwardly walked over and stood beside her. I cocked my head and stared, wondering what I should do. Coming to a decision, I returned my feathers to normal and gently set a wing over her back.

“Tia!?” She asked in a high voice as she looked up. Seeing a giant hawk didn’t sit well with her. “Aaaah! Tia, save me!!” She yelled into the forest as she cowered on the ground. I looked around expecting another pony to jump out and start attacking me. When none came I got confused. Was she alone?

“Chirp?” I chirped as I lay my wing across her as gently as I could. She slowly uncurled when I did that.

“Your not going to eat me?” I shook my head slowly. “Can you help me find my sister?” I cocked my head to the side, once again confused. “I wandered off. And got lost.” She said, embarrassed. “I’m gunna be in so much trouble.”

“Chirp!” I looked around then took to the skies, eager to help the poor filly find her sister. I had just lost my brother after all. And my family. The thought nearly sent me to the ground, but I punched it aside and climbed higher. Once I was pretty high in the sky I started circling. Not once did I question my sudden ability to fly. Nope. Not once.

After circling for about 10 minutes, periodically checking on Luna every once in awhile, I spotted two ponies going through the forest not far away. They appeared to be searching frantically. One was unmistakably a young Celestia. The other I wasn’t sure about. He had a beard and pointy hat on. “KEEEEEEEAR” I shrieked as I dove back down to Luna. Once I landed she looked excitedly at me. “Did

you find them!?” I nodded rapidly. Then I looked in the direction I saw them, trying to decide how to go about getting her back to them. I came to the conclusion that carrying her would be the fastest way.

Hovering over to her, I slowly lined my self up to pick her up. She looked with a mystified expression. Until I picked her up. Then she giggled. “Haha! That tickles!” I smiled to myself as I took off through the trees. Weaving through the forest and between branches with agility I never knew I had. Trees flew by as little Luna giggled in my claws. Wind blew past us as we raced towards her family. After a few minutes I started hearing voices through the trees.

“Luna!!”

“LULU!!! Where are you!!” I raced towards the voices, quickly arriving behind the ponies.

“Chirp” I set Luna down as the ponies spun around. Luna ran to hug Celestia while the bearded pony lit his horn up. And shot at me!! “KEEEEEAR” I shrieked at him as I dodged the glowing blue energy beam.

“Wait!” Luna yelled. “He helped me!!”

“What!? Luna it’s a...hawk?” The bearded pony started, seeming to notice how I looked for the first time.

“What is it Starswirl?” Asked Celestia. I nearly hit the ground. *STARSWIRL!?*

“I’m not sure Tia. Some kind of magical creature that I have never seen before.” He stared at me intently before approaching. I nervously landed, not wanting another beam hurled at me. I liked living. “It appears to be remarkably intelligent for an avian.” Swirl noted. Yeah, Starswirl is too long. I’m going to call him Swirl. “How did you find him Luna?”

“I didn’t. He found me. I’m not sure where he came from. One minute I was alone. And then he just popped up beside me.” Luna

answered. Right, I had been disguised when she came out. The bushes nearby rustled and I flinched and turned tree like again.

“Amazing!” Swirl exclaimed as a squirrel ran out of the bushes. “Incredible! Each feather is capable of an advanced illusion spell!!” He excitedly danced around me, lifting my wings and feet. “It seems the only parts not effected are his talons, beak, and eyes.” I blinked, feeling quite uncomfortable. “No, it seems even the eyelid has feathers on it. This is incredible, I have never seen a species like this before!!”

“Caaaaw!” I exclaimed as he got a little to close to my face.

“Starswirl, as much as I love your lectures, we really should continue towards Skytown.” Celestia stated. “We’ve already lost enough time as it is.”

“You’re right Tia. As much as I would love to study this creature we must be on our way. Fare thee well.” He said to me before he and Tia turns away and started walking into the forest. Luna stared at me for a bit with sad eyes before Swirl called her. “Come along Luna, Skytown won’t stay this close for long.” With that she turned and ran into the woods away from me.

I sat there for awhile wondering what I was supposed to do now. I didn’t know how to get home. And I didnt really have anything I had to do. Was wandering around really the answer? Most likely not. I decided to do the most reasonable thing. I quickly took off and pushed myself above the trees. Once high enough, I turned in the direction the ponies went. Realizing I would be seen easily at this height, I focused on the sky and turned my feathers sky blue. A few of them even had wispy clouds moving across them.

Soon enough I caught up to the ponies and stopped flapping my wings. I watched them from above as I glided through the sky, only flapping my wings occasionally. I didn’t know what this ‘Skytown’ was. But my best bet to get home was to stick with the pony wizard.

Author's Notes:

So, thoughts? Good? Bad? Mistakes?

Skytown

Following three ponies through the woods for hours wasn't as boring as you'd think. I got to learn how good my new bird eyes were. I could see for MILES! And I got to watch Luna do adorable things to her sister. Like jump on her back and act out plays. Or pounce on frogs and crickets. I realized that Tia was probably older than Luna by a good bit. Judging by how she calmly walked alongside Swirl and discussed things I couldn't hear with him, she was a teenager already. Luna acted like she was still five or six. I also realized that Swirl was the same size as Celestia. *She must still be growing.*

I wasn't sure where we were headed, but they had been walking for hours. Every once in awhile I swore Luna looked right at me. But I knew that wasn't possible. Swirl seemed to know where they were going, and occasionally his horn would light and he would adjust his direction slightly. It was after hours of this that I finally saw something. A white blob on the horizon slowly appeared. As we traveled in that direction it slowly got bigger. *What is that?* After a few hours it was close enough to make out. *Oh. My. Gosh.* It was a huge city in the clouds. Huge. Bigger than Cloudsdale in the show. It was probably 5 miles across. It was a giant circle of clouds that took up a good portion of the horizon as we got closer. I was so distracted by the beautiful sight that I almost missed the trio I was following stop.

I ground to a halt and hovered as they did...something. Swirl lit up his horn and shot a beam at the sisters one at a time. They were enveloped in magic for a moment before it faded. When it disappeared they were hornless. They looked like ordinary Pegasi. Strangely, Starswirl didn't change himself. His horn lit up, along with his body, before fading to normal. Then Tia picked him up and started flying up to the city. Luna looked **right at me** before following her sister. I followed as closely as I could but it was hard once they got in the city. Luckily, Tia's pink mane made it slightly easier.

Where are they going? I asked myself. Weaving between buildings was getting harder and harder the further we went. They were about a mile from the edge now, and it was already getting crowded. Swirl must have cast a cloud walking spell on himself. He seemed almost used to the crowds. And he wasn't the only unicorn up here. Though few and far between there were other unicorns on the clouds. He barely even got glances from the pegasi around us. I didn't get any luckily. I doubt I would be very welcome.

It seemed I was about the same size as the adults around us. I noticed when one flew uncomfortably close to me. I don't think the other ponies would like me as much as Swirly.

Look at all the stuff up here! Vendors lined the street selling all kinds of Knick knacks. I was tempted to stop a few times and look but I had more important things to take care of. Following the trio around a corner, I saw Starswirl duck into a building with the sisters behind him. I hovered in place while I figured out what to do. Looking around, I dove down to a window sill. I changed my feathers to look like a dark window and landed on the ledge. I listened carefully for where the ponies went and heard voices from the second floor. I flew up to that window sill and once again landed. I heard Swirl discussing something with some pony I didn't know.

"Are you sure you can't help us? Your special talent is tracking!" Swirl said.

"Sorry, but I can't help you this time Star. I have plans with family and no time for some crazy adventure."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes. I'm sure"

"Alright." Starswirl sighed. "We'll just find our own way then." With that I heard hoof steps going towards down stairs and towards the door. I took off and made my body look like the sky once more. Luna, Tia, and Swirl walked out and started towards the edge of the city. I followed closely, though I stayed far above this time. It was too stressful navigating the city from street level.

Once they reached the edge, Tia once again carried Swirl. Luna followed them to the ground. Once there they walked away from the city in the opposite direction than they arrived in. Based on the position of the sun we were headed west. After a few hours they stopped and laid down. Despite gliding most of the way, I to was tired. I dove quickly into the branches above them and changed to look like I was made of leaves. Only my beak and talons were undisguised. I rested on a branch not far above them. "I can't believe it" Swirl said, frustrated. "He would have helped tremendously."

"It's ok Starswirl. We'll find it. Then we can be rid of it and move on with our lives."

"Yeah! Besides, I'm sure mister hawk can help us! Right!?" She asked as she looked up at me. *What!?*

"Caaaw!" I choked as I fell out of the tree and hit the ground. Ow. Tia and Swirl looked very surprised when I hit the ground. Momentarily dazed, my feathers returned to the spacey background they seemed to love.

"Ooh, pretty!" Luna cooed as she ran up and tackled me. My eyes refocused as she snuggled into my chest.

"Where you following us the whole time?" Tia asked. I nodded slowly, having a slightly harder time breathing with a filly on my chest.

"Amazing" Starswirl whispered. "How smart are you?" I shrugged, not really knowing how to answer that. I rolled Luna off me and stood up. Luna stuck to my side as she watch a small asteroid go across my body. "Why have you followed us?"

"Chirp" I replied. *Have fun translating that.* Starswirl looked disappointed for a second before perking up.

"Well, whatever the reason, Luna is right. We are tracking down a beast of shadow. We would greatly appreciate if you would help us." Swirl started. I nodded.

“Chirp.”

“Are you sure? It will be dangerous. I’d rather more lives not be lost in vain.” Tia said sadly. I was confused. I never heard of a ‘beast of shadow’ in the show. And lives lost in vain? What happened?

“What is your name creature? You appear intelligent enough to have one.” Swirl said. *I'm not sure whether to be insulted or not.*

“Chirp” I shrugged sadly. *My name is Josh. But I can't exactly tell you that.*

“Oh.” Starswirl said. He slumped slightly.

“Night Wing.” Tia said. *What?*

“What?” Swirl voiced my thoughts.

“Let’s call him Night Wing.” Tia suggested. “How does that sound?” She asked me.

“Chirp!” It wasn’t a half bad name.

“I like it!” Luna said.

“Caaaw!!” I yelled as I felt a sharp pain on my new tail. I looked back and saw Luna smiling and holding a long feather in her mouth. Surprisingly, it still showed space. She walked over to Tia and proudly held it out to her.

“Look sis! I brought you a pretty feather!!” Luna exclaimed, extremely proud of herself.

“Thank you lulu.” Tia giggled. “But let’s not take all of Night’s feathers. I don’t think he would like that.” She smiled at me. I made grumbling sound, but I was smiling internally. Luna was adorable.

“Well, it’s time for bed Luna, Tia.” Swirl announced. I then noticed how dark it had gotten. “We have a long day ahead of us tomorrow.” He lit his horn and several logs levitated out of the woods. He piled the logs in the middle of the clearing and a spark jumped from his horn into the pile. The logs lit up with orange

flames. He pulled some sleeping bags out of some saddle bags I didn't notice before. They were the same color as his fur. He passed two bags to the sisters and laid his own out on the ground. "Goodnight." He said as he lay down. The sisters did the same, and a silence fell over our makeshift camp. I flew up to a low branch and perched there.

The fire reflected in my eyes as I watched over the sleeping ponies. I didn't feel tired, so I instead let my mind wander. *How is my family taking this? Do they think I'm dead? Will I ever get back?* These thoughts and more went through my mind late into the night.

Author's Notes:

So. Comments? Also, I'm going to try and slow the story down.

On The Trail

The next day we set out early. The sun was just peaking out over the horizon and casting golden light through the trees. Luna was happily bouncing along next to her sister while I flew high above keeping a look out for....anything I guess. I noticed Swirl wave at me and I descended to the ground and hovered in front of him.

“Could you look for tracks that look like this?” He asked before levitating a stick and drawing in the dirt. He drew what looked like a big three clawed animal track. I studied the track and nodded at him. “Thank you. This will make our search much easier.” I nodded again and took off into the sky. I kept a sharp eye out for anything resembling what he had shown me. After a few hour though, I started wondering if I would ever see anything like it. I hadn’t seen any tracks or big beasts. What I had seen was lots of food. Mice, squirrels, rabbits. Even a few small birds looked appetizing.

Deciding to take a break from looking, I located something to eat. I set my sights on a squirrel eating nuts. I started to descend before I stopped. I was a hawk now. And I had always wanted to try sky diving. So, thinking over what I was about to do, I lined myself up with the squirrel. And I dove. Pinning my wings to my side, I dove faster than I had before. The wind whistled gloriously past my ears and my heart raced. Right before I hit the ground I opened my wings, turning my vertical movement into horizontal thrust. “KEEEEEEEEEEEAR!!!” I shrieked right as I grabbed the squirrel. It struggled for a second before I bent my head down and bit it’s neck. When I did so I noticed frost bite on the squirrel where my talons dug into it. And on the neck where I bit it.

I settled down on the ground and started tearing into the squirrel. Using my hooked beak to tear the flesh, I made quick work of the corpse. After finishing I prepared to take off. Right before I did so though, I saw something in the dirt. I went to investigate the strange marking. When I got there I quickly realized it was the track I was looking for. Taking off in a cloud of dust, I climbed as fast as I could. I slowly circled until I saw where the others were. Once I

above them I let out a loud shriek. “KEEEEEEEEEEAR!!” When Starswirl looked up I made a ‘over here’ motion with my head and went to circle over the spot where I found the track.

When the ponies got close to the track I descended to meet them at the spot. Landing on the ground, I waited for the group to arrive. When they walked out of the trees I went to the mark and said “Chirp!” Swirl excitedly ran over to the track.

“Finally!! Some progress!!” He joyously stated. He followed the track across the clearing before returning to us. “It seems we’re going in the right direction. We simply need to adjust our heading slightly and we will run into the beast eventually.” I cocked my head and motioned at the mark with my talon. “We never told you why we are looking for this creature did we?” I shook my head. “Well-“ he started. But he stopped when he noticed the look on the sisters faces. “Tia, why don’t you take Luna to get some palmetto leaves. It looks like it might rain tonight.” I looked up at the cloudless sky and cocked my eye brow at him. He just shook his head at me as Tia took her sister to get palmetto leaves for the ‘rain’.

“Now then. I didn’t want Luna to hear us. She’s been through enough.” I tilted my head questioningly. “You see.” Swirl began. “A week ago we were staying at a village. Luna and Tia have lived with me since their parents death.” He looked down sadly. “It was a small village, and we had been there for nearly a year. The longest we had stayed in any one place due to risk of discovery.” I tilted my head at this. “They are a combination of all three races. I don’t want them to hide it, but I’m afraid of how other ponies will react. Racism is still common despite the windigos years ago. Anyways. We were at the village. It was as normal a day as any. I cast an illusion on the sisters at breakfast and left for work while they went to do odd jobs around town. I worked at the library on the far end of town. I was about half way there when the screaming began.” he looked around nervously. “I ran in the direction it came from, but it was too late. Some beast had made it through the village walls. It was huge and covered in wispy shadows. By the time I had arrived it had killed four ponies already. And it wasn’t stopping. I charged up my strongest spell and fired it at him. But it shrugged it off. I

stayed as long as I could, trying to fight it off. But worry overcame me and I went to look for the Tia and her sister.” He gained a sad look as he remembered the events. “When I found them, Tia was wrapped around Luna. They were huddled in an alley. Unsure of what was happening. It was about that time that the town’s oil stores exploded. I don’t know how, but the oil storage caught fire. Flaming debris and oil rained across the town. We had no choice but to leave. We hid in the woods and hoped we weren’t found. When we came back the next day, all that was left was ash and a set of tracks. Celestia swore revenge, and we couldn’t leave Luna. So here we are. Hunting a monster I have no idea how to kill.” He looked ready to collapse from stress.

I shuffled over to him and laid a wing comfortingly on him. “Comforted by a bird.” He gave a small smile. “Never thought I’d see the day. You will make one part of our journey easier. The tracking part. All I have to do now is figure out what to do when we find it. Our best bet is these.” He reached into his saddlebag and pulled out *The Elements of Harmony*! I internally gasped. “After they defeated Discord I hid these away under every house we stayed in. I knew ponies would either fear them, or try to make them out as some deities. I don’t want either of those things for them. They deserve a good childhood.” I stood still. Staring at the powerful jewels in front of me. “So, surely a creature such as yourself has a story. What’s is it? Why are you all alone in the middle of nowhere?” Swirl attempted a small smile.

His question snapped me back to reality. *My story? Oh buddy, you have no idea.* I motioned to my throat with a wing. “Chirp.” Starswirl looked very disappointed at this.

“Oh well. Sad to say I don’t know anyone who can talk to animals.” He said wryly. At about this time the sisters came back. Neither carried anything, but they both looked excited. “What are you two grinning about?” Swirl asked them with a small smile.

“Look what we found!” Luna said in her high voice. She pulled a bundled up leaf from under her wing and held it out to Starswirl. He took it and unwrapped it in his magic.

“Blue berries! We found a whole bush of them!” Tia exclaimed.

“Mhmm! And sis let me carry them!!” Luna beamed happily. *That's to adorable. Maybe we can throw her at the beast and she can adorable it to death.* I smiled inwardly at my little joke.

“Well! This will certainly make for a good dinner! Let's save some for tomorrow to.” Swirl told the sisters. With that they dug into the berries, deeply enjoying themselves. I wasn't very hungry myself. Maybe I didn't need to eat as much as a hawk?

As the light faded from the world we settled for the night. As the ponies slept I sat on a branch and watched over the camp. I stared at the track left in the dirt. *What are we going to do when find this thing? Zap it with the Elements and hope it works?* It didn't seem like a good plan to me. And I was worried about Tia and Luna. If something happened to them then this world would be in for lots of trouble. But they were alive in the show so.....nothing bad could happen. Right?

Author's Notes:

So, I expect a lot of mixed reviews with this chapter. I honestly didn't like it as much as my other chapters. I had to force a little bit of it. But leave a comment about what you liked and didn't like. Also, I feel I should explain that this is AFTER Discord. But before Nightmare Moon. This is going to kind of bridge the two together if everything goes to plan. Which it won't probably.

Preening

We set out earlier again the next morning. Swirl and the sisters packed their sleeping bags and started walking, with me trailing them high above. I would occasionally call out if I saw any tracks to alert Starswirl. We seemed to be making good progress, except for one thing.

Come on you stupid wings!! You didn't do this before! My wings seemed to be dragging the air more than usual. It slowed me down and made me have to flap near constantly to keep up with the group. *Oh my gosh this is a work out.* I huffed into the wind. My wings were starting to burn and I needed to catch my breath. "KEEEEEEAR!!" I screeched. Swirl stopped along with Luna and Tia to watch me spiral down. I aimed for a branch beside them but missed it by quite a bit. "Caaaaw!!!" I.....cawed. Flapping my wings to slow myself down, I hit the dirt and rolled. *Oooooow.* I laid there catching my breath.

"Are you ok!?" Luna ran up to me and jumped on my chest. *Oh god!* "Are you awake!?"

"Luna! Get off of him, your hurting him!" Tia ran up to her and pulled her off of me. *Oh thank goodness.* I took in big gulps of air as the weight was lifted off of me. "Are you ok Night?"

I shook my head and took deep breaths. "Hmmm." Starswirl hummed. He leaned close to me and observed something he found interesting. "Have you been preening?" *Preening? Why would I-oh*

"Chirp." How do I tell them I don't know how to preen? I'm a bird to them.

"Well no wonder your exhausted. Everything with wings needs to preen. Why haven't you been doing it?"

"Chirp." I motioned to my wings with my head and shrugged my shoulders.

“What? You don’t know how?” Tia asked disbelievingly.

“That’s crazy! I learned to preen years ago!” Luna added. “How old are you?”

“Chirp.” Another shrug.

“You don’t know? That’s sad. I’m a whole three years old!!” Luna bragged. I couldn’t help but smile internally at that.

“Would you like help?” Tia asked. I nodded, a little embarrassed.

“Your a strange bird Night. A very strange bird.” Swirl commented.

And so Tia began instructing me on how to care for my feathers while Swirl and Luna rested nearby. She did one of my wings and let me do the other, only correcting me when needed. I fell into a rhythm of adjusting feathers. It was a deceptively easy task. Turns out I had oil glands at the base of each feather. I had to use my beak to straiten each feather, then coat it with a little oil. It also helped when you had what amounted to a real-time video of space to watch. Did I mention I love space?

This was also my first real chance to get really close to one of the ponies. As we both worked on my wing I studied her closely. Her mane was just shy of being a painful pink, settling on a baby pink. It didn’t flow yet so I wondered when that started. She was just barely bigger than me and Swirl. *I wonder how other ponies will react to a giant hawk.* I made a snickering noise as I thought about that. Had they discovered griffins yet? Even if they had, they where different than a full on bird.

I noticed she didn’t use her magic to adjust any feather. *Now that I think about it, neither her nor Luna have used any magic.* I moitained with my finished wing at her horn. “Chirp?”

“What?” Tia looked at her horn in confusion. “What’s wrong with my Horn? Is there something on it?” She started rubbing her horn in an attempt to remove whatever was there.

“Chirp.” I shook my head and motioned to Starswirl, who was levitating Luna around.

“Oooh. Well, Luna and I don’t use magic because Starswirl illusion spell keeps us from using it. It prevents us from accidentally levitating something if we’re not paying attention.” She frowned a little. “Unfortunately he hasn’t figured out how to shorten the magic prevention with the illusion. So we can’t use magic for a full day after the illusion is dispelled. And we haven’t used any today because there hasn’t been a reason to.” I motioned my head at the wing we were working on. “Oh, magic is no good for preening. You can’t feel with your magic as well as you can by actually touching something.”

Huh. The more you know. She levitated a branch over to us and started spinning it in the air. “Starswirl also puts a magic blocking spell on Luna. Young unicorns tend to have a few magic surges. Especially alicorns foals it seems.” She paused to adjust a couple feathers. “When combined with the illusion spell it blocks the surges completely. The down side is that it stores the surge. Releasing it later when it’s dispelled. But on its own it just lessens the severity.” Tia explained. She looked thoughtfully at my wing before adjusting a few more feathers. I realized I wasn’t helping and leaned down to work more on the wing. *Apparently I’m getting a magic lesson. Never thought that would happen.* With a few twists of my head I finished the last couple feathers.

“Chirp!” I thanked Celestia, nodding my head at how clean my wings looked. The next second I was on the ground with something on my back.

“Your wings are even more pretty now!!” Luna yelled in excitement. It was true. You know when you get dust on your glasses, or your phone screen and you don’t notice how blurred the screen was until you brush it off? That’s how my wings were. I didn’t notice how much the dirt and dust fogged them up until they were clean.

“Yes yes. Pretty bird. Now we need to move. We have wasted enough day light by now.” Starswirl smirked at me as he saw me staring at my wings. *What? There cool ok?*

“Caaaaaw!” I flew over him and knocked off his hat. Flapping my wings was much smoother now, and I could glide full speed again. I looked down and saw Swirl grumbling as he picked up his hat and settled it on his head. I smiled internally as I looked down at them.

These ponies are really growing on me.

That night, as everyone settled down, I thought about some things that were bothering me. Namely, the fact I wasn't as freaked out as I should be. I should be freaked out about being in another dimension. I should be depressed beyond belief at being away from my family. I **should** be more concerned about getting home. Yet I wasn't. I was traveling through the woods with three magical ponies. As a bird. Hunting a shadow monster. *Just another Tuesday.*

Author's Notes:

Thoughts? Problems? Corrections?

Civilization

“Alright, we’ll be arriving at the town in a few minutes. Lets cast the illusion spell.” Starswirl told the sisters. The only reason I heard is because I was walking beside them. The only reason I was walking beside them is because the town would see me if I was flying. The only reason I’m stressing this point so much is because I REALLY want to be flying. It’s addicting. *All those years of just saying no.*

Starswirl cast the illusion on Tia and little Luna. I watched there horns fade away until nothing was there. “Now.” Swirl turned and looked at me. “You are going to be a problem.” *Me?* I cocked my head. “Yes you. Don’t think you get out of going to town with us. Hmmm.” His horn lit and I felt a tingling for a second before it stopped. I looked down expecting a pony, but I still looked the same. “Just as I thought. I can not cast an illusion on you.” He sat down and started stroking his beard. *Well. I guess I could stay in the woods. I looked around. Probably hunt some thing to. Getting a little hungry.*

When we started walking that morning, Starswirl had told us we were getting close to a village. Which was good because they were running low on hay. *Yuck. Can’t imagine dry grass tasting very good....of course I wouldn’t have thought raw rabbit was good a few days ago either.*

“Oh well.” Swirl said, pulling my gaze back to him. “We’ll just have to do this the old fashioned way.”

I was not happy. *Hes probably laughing his head off on the inside.* I grimaced as my wing cramped a little, soon joined by my leg. *I’m gunna kill somebody when this is over.*

Finally, after what felt like hours, the little crate I was in stopped moving. And dropped to the ground with a bang. “Caaaaw!” I grimaced as I landed on my wing. With a screeching noise, the lid was pulled off the crate. I scrambled out and collapsed on the cold

stone floor. *Fresh air!!* I took big gulps of air as I lay on my back and let my wings stretch as far as they could.

“Be quiet you feather brain! We don’t want somebody hearing you.” Swirl glared at me. “Besides, it wasn’t that bad.” I glared at him. “You get used to it.”

Looking away from him I took in the building around us. We were in a simple looking house. I was laying just beside the front door. A short hallway led from the door into a living room that took up the back half of the house. Before it reached the living room it had two doorways in it, directly across from each other. I stood up and looked through them. The one on the left led to a kitchen. The kitchen didn’t have much in it. Just a wood stove, a sink, a few cabinets, and what looked to be a pantry in the back. On the right side it had a door that led back to the living room. *I’ll have to check out the sink later. Didn’t think they had running water yet.* I left the kitchen to check out the other room. It looked like a mudroom, except it had a small tub in the middle with a wide, bumpy piece of wood in it. *A washboard. Must be where they do laundry.*

Going back into the hall, I turned and went into the living room. It was relatively small. Of course, the whole house didn’t look too big. It had a few wooden chairs, a table, and a fireplace. On the right side were some stairs leading to a second floor. I started to walk toward them until Tia started talking.

“See you later Luna. Nightwing will watch you while we’re gone.” Tia said as she and Swirl walked toward the door. *WHAT!?*

“Caaaaw!” I yelled. Quickly I ran over to Starswirl and Tia. I pointed at the door and tilted my head.

“We need money to pay for food.” Swirl stated. “Usually Tia will take Luna with her while she does odd jobs, but its hard to work and watch a sibling. So you are on foal sitting duty. Congratulations!!” He smirked at me. “And remember, be quiet. Giant hawks aren’t exactly common you know.” With that he and Tia walked out the front door while I stood there, stunned.

I can’t take care of a filly!! I’ve never even touched a horse! I started

panicking while I sat there by the front door. That is, until something hit my chest and made me and it roll all the way into the living room.

“Isn’t this great!?” The object on my chest said. I looked down to see Luna hugging me tightly. “We get to spend the whole day together!!” She beamed up at me. *Oooh. I can’t stay upset with that face looking at me.*

“Chirp.” I gently pushed her off and looked around. What was there to do with a little filly?

“Hey look! They have books over here!” Luna stood by a previously unnoticed book shelf. “They all look pretty boring though. Just school books on magic.” I perked up at that. *Magic?* I walked up to the book shelf and looked at the spines of the books. They all looked like the spines of boring text books. They didn’t even have names on the spines. Just some fancy squiggles at the bottom of the spine.

“Chirp?”

“Oh, I know they’re magic books because of those little squiggles at the bottom. All of Star’s magic books had those.” Luna explained. *Hmmmm. Well if it’s about magic, then surely it can’t be THAT boring.* I pulled one off the shelf with my talon and laid it on the floor. “Are you actually gunna read that? It’s really boring stuff.” Luna cutely pouted when I opened the book and started reading. “Well be that way then. I’m just gunna look at your pretty wings. I love stars.”

A few minutes later had Luna pacing around the room. “Come on!! Let’s do something fun.”

“Chirp!” I replied. I was enraptured by the book. I had been right. It wasn’t boring at all! *Magic is awesome!* I thought as I looked over different diagrams that demonstrated how to do spells. A particularly interesting one was the shadow puppet spell. It stated that it was for foals to use for shadow puppets, but I had a sneaking suspicion that it was made for other things. The fact that it was an adult book talking about foal stuff was the first sign something was up. The fact it showed a pony wrapping themselves in shadow was

another. *Must be trying to mislead people reading it. Don't want everybody knowing that you sell books with dangerous spells in them.*

"Uuuugh! This is boring!" Luna said. She hopped over to where I had the book. "Ooh! That looks cool!!" She looked over my shoulder. "To bad my magic is locked. I would try it out if I could." *Thank goodness it's locked. I don't want you running around the house as a shadow.* Luna looked at the diagram for awhile until she decided she was bored again. She laid down beside me and lifted my wing over her. Snuggling into my side she said "Your really warm. And boring." She let out a yawn. She was asleep in a few minutes.

By the time the others got back it was already dark. Swirl and Tia pranced into the living room, chatting away to each other. "Caaaw." I said quietly to get there attention. Once they were both looking at me I pointed my head at Luna.

"Aaaaw! She so adorable." Tia cooed. While Tia was watching her sister sleep, I was glaring at Starswirl.

"What?" He looked at me innocently. "You did a very good job foal sitting. And we made enough money for food! Tia even got herself a new cloak." He pulled a tan colored cloak with a hood out of his saddle bag. "Isn't it nice?"

I simply glared and pretended I could use that levitation spell I saw earlier. Imagine my surprise when his hat yanked itself down over his eyes. "Hey!!" He yelled. Luna stirred slightly under my wing before settling down. He turned to glare at Tia. "What was that for!?"

"I didn't do anything!" Tia defended.

"Chirp." I shushed the two, pointing at Luna with my head.

"So my hat just yanked itself down for no reason?" Starswirl had a 'really?' look on his face.

"I didn't do it! I promise!" *Ok, as amusing as this is, they're going to*

wake up Luna if they continue with this.

“Chirp!” I got the attention of both of them. I glared at them both before pointing once again at Luna. They both winced at that, realizing they almost woke her. Then I grabbed Swirl’s hat with my telekinesis. *I got the magic!!* I cheered in my head. I brought his hat over to me and set it upon my head. I gave Starswirl a cheeky grin. Apparently beaks can smile.

“You clever bird.” Starswirl breathed “You can use magic? But you don’t have a horn.” He walked up and looked me in the eye. “Do it again. Now.” *Stay out of my bubble please.* I pushed him back with my new found magic. “Amazing.” He said as the black aura disappeared from him. “It seems that your black aura appears around your eyes when you use magic. I wonder what other spells you can do.” *None right now. That little bit made me tired.*

“Chirp.” I rolled onto my back and pulled Luna onto my chest.

“We have beds upstairs you know.” Tia said. I just shook my head and closed my eyes. Sleep quickly took me.

Author's Notes:

What do you think? Good? Bad? Also, I would like some suggestions for some slice of life filler chapters. Also, apparently my iPad likes to turn my I’s into 8’s

Terror

Ever woke up to an annoying alarm clock? It has the most annoying buzz ever? It makes you want to smack the closest thing to you and kill the sun? You know what I'm talking about? Good. Cuz that's not what happened this morning. Or night actually. I woke up to screaming. Not the 'Oh god I forgot the cake in the oven!' Screaming. Not the 'Oh god my kitchens on fire!' Screaming. It was the 'OH GOD!!! I'M BEING EATIN ALIVE!!!' Screaming.

"What in the blazes!?" I heard Starswirl upstairs. I tried to get up, only to be held down by a quickly waking Luna.

"What's happening!?" She cowered into me and I wrapped my wings around her.

"Starswirl!! Come look quickly!!" Tia shouted. I heard rapid footsteps as more screams seeped in from outside. Presumably Tia and Swirl were looking out a window.

"Great Discord!! Not again!!" Swirl exclaimed. *What again!? What's happening!?* I rolled over a dumped Luna on the floor. Then, as an apology, I levitated her and put her on my back. I ran upstairs to where I heard Tia and Swirl. "Not here." I heard Swirl say from a room to the side. I busted through the door and ran up to the window, standing beside them. "We're not ready!" What I saw outside was chaos. Ponies running everywhere, knocking each other down, lying dead in the streets. *What did this!? What are they running from!?* My question was answered promptly.

A huge feline beast walked around the corner onto our street. It held a pony in its jaws, or it did, until it bit clean through it and the two halves fell to the street leaking blood. I pulled Luna into my side and covered her with a wing, not wanting her to see. I was too late though judging by the sobbing coming from under the feathers. It darted forward, almost too fast to see, and grabbed another pony. Shadows seemed to leak out its mouth, eyes, and even skin. We

were all broken out of shock when it looked right at us. Then suddenly, it was gone....until the door below us crashed in and something pounded up the stairs. Starswirl quickly lit his horn and with a flash teleported us out. Except only him and Tia teleported. Not even thinking, I wrapped Luna in my wings and pressed up on the wall. The beast barged in right as my feathers changed to look like the wall. The only thing not cloaked was my eyes and talons. *Come on! Shut your eyes!!* I yelled at my self. Luna had quieted down, likely knowing it was in the room. But if it saw my eyes it would surely see us. Ever tried shutting your eyes with a monster hunting you? It's not easy. *Shut! Your! EYES!!* I finally did it. And I was terrified. I couldn't see where the creature was, but I could hear him walking. And walking. And then it stopped. And I waited. When nothing happened I released a breath I didn't realize I had been holding.

“KEEEEEEEAR!!!” That breath quickly turned into a shriek as it bit into my wing and tore it off. I had never felt such pain.

“KEEEEEAR!!!” I shrieked once more in agony. I threw my talons forward and scratched across its face. Thinking quickly, I ran to the window and **threw** Luna through it before the creature dragged me back. “CAAAAAAA-ACK” My angry caw turned into a choke as the creature sank his fangs into my throat. I used my talons to scratch him every where I could reach, leaving trails of frost bitten flesh all over his front half. My one wing beat uselessly against his face trying vainly to loosen his hold. My scratches started to slow and weaken, and my wing stopped flapping. My body just started twitching in a final effort to get away. As my thoughts slowed to a stop, I thought one last thing. *At least I did something worth doing before I died.*

Starswirl

Tia and I ran back to the house at full tilt. I don't know why, but the spell didn't work. Sure it was experimental, but I had tested it many times. *It should have worked!!* We both ran faster when we heard Nightwing shriek in pain. As we neared the house the window exploded and Luna hit the ground with a dull thump. “Luna!!” Tia screamed beside me. She ran ahead to her sister while

I ran into the house. *Dont you dare die!!* I raced up the steps as I heard a crow call suddenly stopped by choking. I blew the door off it's hinges just in time to see his body twitch a few final times. Just in time for the creature to glare at me with it's one good eye left and it's blackened front half. Just in time for my anger to boil over and charge a bolt of magic the size of my head.

“SKRRRRREEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE!!!” The monster cried when the bolt hit it. As it lay stunned I ran back outside. I grabbed the sisters and ran. I picked up every pony we came across and continued to the edge of town. By the time we got there I had six other ponies in my magic. And the beast was the only thing in our way. It appeared as if out of air, blood still on it's muzzle, and a few familiar feathers stuck in it's fur. It let out a deep growl as it advanced on us. I looked desperately to the right. Then the left. There was no way out. The ponies in my grasp sobbed as they accepted their fate. The sisters had forlorn looks on their faces. The monster had a savage glee in his eye. And I....I said no more. *Lets try this again.* I charged up as much energy as I could into my horn. Time seemed to slow. The monster almost hovered, mid leap, as I released the magic. And the creature landed on nothing. We were gone.

Author's Notes:

Ha ha ha!! Nobody expected that did they? I will say this, Night has ONE power that phoenixes do. Also, I need names, races, and cutie marks for six random ponies. Most of them earth ponies please. Maybe a pegasus and a unicorn. And I need at least, ONE, teenage stallion. One. For reasons I shall not reveal. Also, how was this chapter? Tell me why you hated or liked it.

Immortal

Third Person POV

In a clearing far away, a loud POP and a flash of light lit up the forest. Nine ponies appeared out of thin air, and a bearded one collapsed from exhaustion. “Starswirl!!” Tia shouted and ran to check on him.

“I’m fine.” He grumbled. “Go check on your sister.” He pointed to the sobbing Luna.

“Where are we!?”

“What happened!?”

“Bronze!! Where are you!?” Starswirl grimaced at the shouting from the other ponies.

“Be quiet!” He shouted. The other ponies fell silent, the only sound sniffing from a few of them. “We need to start moving. I don’t know where we are, and some of you are bleeding. That’s a guarantee we’ll see some timberwolves.”

“You did this!” A earth pony stallion came up to Starswirl, A larger earth pony mare right behind him.

“Did what? Slaughter the town or save you all? Because I know I didn’t do the first one!” Swirl yelled at him.

“Forgive my brother.” The large earth pony mare said. She was huge in every sense of the word. “He can be a bit careless with his temper. The names Stone Slab! This is my brother Bullseye.” Starswirl could clearly see the resemblance. Stone Slab had a brown coat and a gray mane. While Bullseye had a dark grey coat and a brown mane. Stone’s cutie mark was a wagon with a slab of stone in it. Bullseye’s was a target with spears crossed over it.

“Just make keep your anger in check and we should be fine around

each other.” Starswirl glared at Bullseye. He turned to address the sisters but stopped when an aching pain ran through his horn. He grimaced and clutched his head until somepony ran up to his side.

“Relax. You just used a lot of magic at one time. Does anyone here know pain numbing spells?” The mare pressed into Swirl’s side asked.

“I do!” A unicorn stallion ran up to Starswirl and lit his horn. His coat was a light blue and his mane a deep purple. He had a aloe plant as a cutie mark. Almost instantly the pain faded.

“Thank you...” Swirl trailed off

“Healing Touch! At your service!” The unicorn announced.

“I’m Lavender Kettle.” The mare told swirl in a gentle voice. The mare had a dark pink coat and a green and blue striped mane. Her mark was a Kettle with a piece of lavender sticking through the top.

“Well thank you both. I’m afraid further introductions will have to wait however, we need to start moving.” As if to illustrate Starswirl’s point, a loud howl echoed in the distance from far away. “Healing! Get to the front and help me light up the area so we can see. We don’t need any broken legs from tripping on tree roots.”

An hour later and the sky was just starting to lighten. Swirl fell towards the back of the line, pulling the sisters with him. Once they were behind everyone else he whispered to them. “I need to remove the illusion. We are defenseless out here and it would be better to have powerful magic late than never.”

“Are you sure Starswirl?” Tia looked nervously ahead to make sure no one heard them. “We’ve spent so much time hiding. Is it really safe to do this?”

“Yeah. You said ponies might hurt us.” Luna looked more sad than scared. The loss of Nightwing clearly affecting her.

“I know what I said. But that’s not a guarantee. It’s just a small chance. A chance I wasn’t willing to take before, but now I have no

choice. I just want your permission. The decision is up to you two.” Swirl explained to them. Luna and Celestia looked at each other and nodded.

“Alright Starswirl. Let’s do it. The sooner the better. We may not have much time before timberwolves show up.” Celestia spoke for both of them. Starswirl looked down in grim acceptance. He was hoping for some way out of this situation.

“Ok, Put this on Celestia.” He pulled her cloak out of the saddle bags he grabbed from the house. Handing it to her he looked to Luna. “What to do.....aha!” He used his magic to style her mane in such a way that it would cover her horn when it reappeared. “Ok, are you both ready?” The sisters nodded and Starswirl’s horn began to glow. With a low POP the disguises fell.

“What was that!?” A pony asked from the middle of the group. Starswirl hadn’t met him yet. He was a unicorn with a gray coat and a silver mane. His mark was an anvil.

“Nothing.” Swirl assured. “Just some accidental magic. My horns still a little sore.”

“Hmm.” A mare up front with Healing Touch looked suspiciously at Starswirl. She had a light gray coat and a dark blue mane. After staring for a minute she turned around and continued walking with Healing. A few minutes later she had ended up at the back beside Swirl. “Your a terrible liar mage....I’m misty. The gray Stallion up there is Silver Anvil.” With that she flew up to the front of the group again.

After a moment of silence Luna spoke. “I like her!”

Several hours later found the group still walking through the woods. Several times Misty had flown up to look around, but she had spotted no nearby towns. Apparently she was a guard at the village. Her mark was two silver wing blades crossed over each other. She still wore silver wing blades, though it had been hard to see at night. One was snapped off half way down the length of it.

They were all sitting down for a short break at the moment. Lavender had spotted some herbs and was stuffing them in her mane due to a lack of saddle bags. She looked quite comical with leaves sticking out of her hair. Though it looked as if she did this often as hardly any fell out.

It was during this quiet time that the snapping twigs really stood out. Everyone perked up and looked towards the sound. Low growls filled the air as six pairs of green eyes appeared. "Starswirl." Tia whispered. "Is there anyway to speed up our magic recovery?"

"No. Try to access it all you can, but unless alicorns are different you shouldn't be able to do anything more than simple levitation at this point. And even that is being generous." Swirl explained grimly. The ponies huddled together in the middle of the clearing as the wolves surrounded them.

"I don't know if I can fight these guys." Misty said. "I'm feeling pretty weak from last night." The others nodded in agreement.

"Well, no choice but to fight. Eh Brother?" Stone Slab asked her brother.

"If I had my spear I might stand a chance." He said in a deep voice. With that the wolves lept in action. One lept at the earth pony siblings and was quickly kicked away. It merely stood again and growled. One more jumped into the air at Misty, but it was swatted away. Tia bucked a wolf away from Luna and covered her protectively. It seemed to be going good until Tia got distracted by a wolf lunging at Starswirl. She went to help only for Swirl to launch it away via magic. Unfortunately she left her sister exposed.

"Aaaah!" Luna shrieked. Celestia spun around and looked in horror.

"**NOOO!!!**" Tia launched the wolf through a tree and far into the woods right before it grabbed Luna. The other ponies looked at her in shock.

"How did you-?" Misty was interrupted by a wolf grabbing her leg and dragging her down. "Aaah!" She hit the ground hard. The

wolves jaws went to close around her neck. And suddenly it was gone. “What the-!?” The wolves looked around in confusion. Until a blue streak took another off into the woods. And another. The fourth simply exploded into frozen splinters. And the fifth almost escaped to the woods. Almost. A blue streak dragged it into the air quickly, and then the clearing was silent. Until the wolf fell back down, dead. It’s body splintered as it impacted the ground, and it’s dead head rolled over to Lavender, dead eyes staring strait into hers.

“Aah!” She leapt behind Healing Touch, who flinched at her loud scream. They all looked around the clearing, confused as to what just happened. Until a giant hawk landed in the middle of the clearing.

“Oh buck!!” Misty charged at the hawk, only to get slammed into the ground by Starswirl.

“Nightwing!! Your alive!!” Luna ran up to the huge bird and hugged him, much to the horror of everyone present. Then their confusion as it didn’t eat her.

“Oooooow.” The hawk looked from Misty to Starswirl and facewinged.

Five Minutes Ago

Night Wing

Dying sucked. Especially when you where killed by something with teeth. It was slightly less sucky when you exploded back to life in a flurry of snow that froze the surrounding area. But it still sucked. A lot.

OH MY GOD!!! I freaked out in my head. I JUST DIED!!! AND CAME BACK TO LIFE!! And I’m lost again!!! Crap. I quickly checked my self over. Making sure my wing was still there. I shivered at the thought of losing it forever. That is until I heard yelling and wood impacting wood. Then a dead timberwolf flew out of the woods and shattered on the tree next to me. I stared wide eyed at the dented tree next to

my head.

Shaking slightly, I took flight. Quickly locating the source of commotion, and seeing Tia huddled protectively over Luna, I put two and two together. *She is never living this one down.*

Present

I leave for two seconds. And this happens. I looked at the ragtag group of ponies and realized this was all that Starswirl managed to grab. I turned to look at Swirl and pointed at the undisguised sisters, injured ponies, and dead timberwolves. “Chirp?” I tilted my head.

“Oh hush.” He looked genuinely happy to see me. “Like you could have done better.” Then he actually ran up and hugged me. *Ooook then.* I awkwardly payed him on the back with a wing. “We thought you were dead! You should have run damn it!!” He pulled back and glared at me. *Oh come on! I panicked!*

“Um. What’s going on?” A light blue stallion asked, clearly confused.

Author's Notes:

Slowly making my way to 2k words. So, how did I do with pony introductions?

Donators

kafyui: Lavender Kettle.

goldenboss: Silver Anvil

Themexininja: Bullseye

wildarms: Stone Slab

Rejectedpony: Healing Touch (So sorry, I forgot to add this one when I published the chapter.)

So how was this chapter? We’re going to have calm for a few chapters now. Hopefully.

Acquaintances

Soaring through the air, I looked down on the ponies. After we all got introduced....the ponies were still nervous around me. Being a giant predator does that. Especially when their town just got massacred. A pang of regret went through me. *I wish we could have saved more.* As far as we knew these were the only survivors. It was likely others survived, but we had yet to see anyone. And with two pairs of eyes in the sky we would have seen anyone nearby. Speaking of which, my current flight partner soared her way over to me. After she got within a few feet of my wing tips, which was still pretty far, she stopped and just watched the forest with me. She hadn't done much walking since the fight. Mostly sticking to the air. Her leg was doing good for what had happened to it. That said, it still looked pretty bad. Lavender had made some kind of healing goop to put on it and Healing Touch has put a pain numbing spell on it. The bite marks were wide and slightly long from where the teeth dragged through her flesh as the wolf pulled her. "We're looking for ponies you know, not legs." I snapped my head up as she spoke. Her eyes were locked ahead of her, not even glancing at me. "So, how does a giant bird end up with a mage and two....whatever they are?"

That almost sounded like the start of a bad joke. I chuckled wryly in my head. "Chirp!" I announced.

"Right, can't talk. How about one Chirp for yes and two for no? Got it? Good." She turned her head as something caught her eye before she refocused ahead of her. "So..." She seemed to struggle for a way to word what she wanted to ask. After a moment of thinking she spoke again. "You all were hunting that creature weren't you? None of you seemed as surprised as the others."

"Chirp."

She seemed to think a moment more before asking another question. "How did you get in town unseen? The mage doesn't seem the type to leave someone outside in the cold." I didn't say anything

as I flapped my wings a couple times to maintain our height. "Right, sorry. Yes or no, you were stuffed into the big box the mage brought into town weren't you?" She smirked a little at that.

"Chirp." I said, irritated.

She seemed to pick up on my irritation easily. "Oh yeah. I was on gate duty when he came into town. That crate looked a little small." She snickered a little as my eyes narrowed. *Never again.* "Alright I leave that alone. It seems like a sore spot." She laughed a little more. "So, I'm guessing you got roped into their little quest huh? I can't imagine you just sticking with a unicorn and some half breeds for no reason." She confidently stated. *Half breeds?* My eyes narrowed at that. *A little rude don't you think?*

"Caaaaw!" I stated my irritation with that statement quite clearly.

"What? You didn't like me calling them half breeds? That's what they are isn't it? I know we're all supposed to get along now but that's a little far." She looked down at the sisters. "Maybe it's just my pegasi pride, but I don't like the idea of unicorns with wings." *Racist.* "That's not bad is it? Everyone says it is. What do you think?" She looked over at me. When I didn't respond she corrected herself. "Right. Is it bad that I think of pegasi as better than other ponies?"

"Chirp!" I loudly stated. With that I glided away from her and left her to her thoughts. I checked on the group below and something caught my interest. Silver Anvil seemed to be having a conversation with Celestia. It was strange because he had said almost nothing the entire time we had been traveling. It was stranger because Celestia seemed to be blushing and acting more shy than usual. *Oh you sly dog. Hitting on Celestia?* I chuckled and raised my eyes up to scan the horizon again.

An hour later we spotted the first town in the distance. "Keeeeeear!" I shrieked.

"What is it!?" Misty asked. She flew over to me and started scanning the ground for trouble. I rose an eyebrow and pointed my

head at the small city in the distance. She squinted for a minute before she saw the town. "You can see that? That's far off. We pegasi have far eyesight." She bragged. "But we can't see as far as you can as clearly. At least I can't. I can barely see that." She looked around the horizon and furrowed her eyebrows. "If I'm right, then Thoughts Mountain in the distance means we're coming up to Brightshine. It's a little mining town. Or it was, until they discovered massive silver deposits in the area. Along with a lot of gems."

"Aaaahaaa!!" Someone yelled below. It sounded like Bullseye. I looked down to see Starswirl looking panicked and the sisters looking shift. I swooped down to see what was happening. "I knew I recognized you lot! Your them ponies that defeated Discord!"

"What are you talking about?" Starswirl asked. "Even if we did, how would you know?"

"Because you defeated him in the middle of Brightshine!! I was hoping to visit some family before we all died to that monster, when you all popped up in the city square! Discord a statue and you three running off before anybody could react! But I'll never forget those horns and wings. Never seen a pony with both since then." Bullseye explained.

"Now that you mention it, I do remember some ponies talking about winged unicorns defeating discord. Everyone dismissed them as crazy." Healing Touch said. "Myself included." Misty flew down and hovered by me.

"Well, I'm sure Star here would tell us if that was the case right Star?" Stone asked him.

"Of course I would. What your saying is preposterous." Starswirl defended.

"Well, there's your answer brother! Let's just continue on our way." She started walking again, dragging her brother behind her.

"Um, we located a town. Brightshine by the looks of it." Misty said catching everyone's attention.

“Really? Well then, let’s not waste anymore time!” Swirl started walking rapidly in the direction Misty pointed.

“What was that about?” Misty asked me. I didn’t answer as I watched Stone and Bullseye wink at each other before following. With that I flew back up to watch over everything. “Hey!” Misty yelled as I hit her with a wing. “What was that for!?”

A few hours later we arrived at the outskirts of town. We stopped just inside the woods so we were out of sight. “Ok. Here is where we part ways. You all can go to the town over there and we will go on about our business.” Starswirl said to everyone. I stood atop a tree branch and rested for a minute. The ponies all looked at each other with raised brows for a minute.

“Pardon me if I sound rude but, it seems you needed us as much as we needed you. We helped fight off those wolves before your bird friend showed up. Safety in numbers and all that.” Bullseye stated. *Bird friend? I’ll have you know I am a purebred hawk of the highest caliber.* I smiled at my internal joke.

“While I hate to admit it, Bullseye is right. You guys are going after that thing right? Well I’m not going anywhere. We deserve revenge just as much as you!” Misty loudly declared.

“Besides, you might need a poultice or two if you get hurt.” Lavender gently said.

“Or a spell! I’m a trained nurse you know!” Healing happily declared. Stone Slab looked around before speaking.

“Well, I suppose I could carry stuff. I’m not a fighter like my brother, but I’m a good bit stronger.” She hit her brother in the shoulder good naturedly.

“I would like to come as well.” Silver shyly looked over at Celestia, making her blush. Starswirl looked around the group.

“Nothing I say will change your minds?” Swirl asked. Everyone shook their heads. Starswirl sighed at this. “Very well. But you all

do as I say. Ok?” Everyone one agreed except Misty. She gave a pained look before finally nodding. “Good. Now, if I am correct, you and Bullseye were guards correct?” He asked Misty.

“Served for ten years.” Misty boasted. “But uh, my blades are broke. And I need a doctor for this leg before we go anywhere.”

“Yes, I noticed. We will head into town and visit the local smithy. And get you to a doctor. You don’t want that left untreated.” Swirl said. “So me and the sisters will stay here while you all go into town and get things sorted out.”

“Nice try, but no.” Stone made Swirl deflate.

“You can't blame a stallion for trying right?” Swirl asked. “Very well, let’s go.” He looked at me for a second. “Could you keep an eye on things from above? We can’t exactly have you seen.” I nodded at him and took off.

As they all walked into town, with the exception of Misty as she hovered, I couldn’t help but feel we had forgotten something. *What is it? I swear I’m forgetting something major.* “THE SAVIORS!!! THEY'RE BACK!!!” A random pony shouted from below. *Oh....that’s what we forgot.*

Author's Notes:

Sorry this one took so long. I had to work late two nights in a row, then I got a little sick. But it’s out now! So, what do you all think?

Saviors

The ponies of the town gathered around our group below as more and more of the town heard about what was happening. Luna hid behind Celestia, who had a worried look on her face, and Starswirl made a flickering dome around them. He had a terrified look on his face as the crowd pressed closer. And with the shield up he couldn't teleport out. "BE QUIEEEEEEET!!" Shouted Bullseye from below. I watched from above, ready to dive in at a moments notice. Though I had a feeling the town ponies wouldn't hurt them. "Now ah know your all excited!" Bullseye continued. "But we've been through a rough spot recently! So we wouldn't mind if you would all kindly back off for a while! Just long enough for us to get some rest at an inn!"

"You can stay at my inn for free!!"

"I'll pay you to stay at my inn!!!" The ponies all began offering free accommodations to the group, excitedly pestering them. With a grimace Starswirl's shield fell down. The ponies began to press closer and Luna got a scared look on her face. Stone Slab and Bullseye got worried looks, along with the rest of the ones not being mobbed. As the crowd grew a little too close a few tears came to Luna's eyes. *Thats enough of that.*

"KEEEEEEEEAR!" I dropped like a bullet, opening my wings at the last moment, and landed with a wave of air beside the sisters. "CAAAAW!!" I spread my wings around them and glared at the ponies.

"Oh yeah! He's with us to!!" Bullseye said, looking relieved. The locals looked between me, the sisters under my wings, and Starswirl. Swirl let out a tired sigh.

"We'll stay with whoever will take us." Swirl announced. All the hooves raised into the air. "All, of us." Most of the hooves went down. Most ponies didn't have the space for that many guest. "Including him." Swirl pointed at me. At this only one hoof remained. *Yes yes, let's all exile the giant hawk.* I thought wryly. I was

a little insulted, but not enough to care. Swirl went up to the pony with their hoof up. The crowd parted as he walked through it, a couple even bowed. "What's your name?" He asked the mare.

"Tidy house!" She practically yelled. She slapped her hooves over her mouth. "Sorry. I'm just excited." Starswirl had a look of irritation and slight relief as he looked around at the crowd.

"Yes, well. We have had a.....long trip. Could you please take us to where we can rest? We can discuss payment later." Swirl told the mare. She paled slightly at the mention of payment, but nodded and started walking through the town excitedly. The crowd parted to let us through, though I saw one or two cautious looks sent my way. The crowd around us murmured quietly as we passed and it slowly began to disperse. By the time we reached the little two story building, we only had a few ponies still following us. And they left when we went through the doors. I was holding Luna under my wing while Celestia stuck close to Starswirl. Everyone except for Tidy seemed to relax when we got inside.

"That was....interesting." Misty looked around the main room. She went to land but winced when her foot touched the ground. "Hey uh, Tidy." She looked over at the earth pony. "Would you happen to know where I could find a doctor? My leg is pretty messed up." Tidy gasped when she saw her leg.

"Oh, you poor thing! What happened?" She ran up to Misty and started cradling her leg. Much to Misty's discomfort.

"Uh, Timberwolf. Soooooooo where is the doctor?" She forcefully pulled her leg out of Tidy's grip.

"Just down the road, it's the building with the scalpel on the sign."

"Thanks, and uh. Would you know where the blacksmith is too?" Misty asked.

"At the end of the same road." With that, Misty flew out the door and went to get her leg healed. Now, if you will all follow me, I will show you to your rooms!" She happily pranced down a hallway forcing us to hurry after her. She stopped in front of a door near the

end of the hallway. "You two love birds can stay here." She pointed at Bullseye and Stone Slab.

"What!? No, we're not-!" Stone Slab started, while Bullseye just made a fish impression. Tidy moved to the door right across from it.

"You and your daughters are welcome to this room!" She told Starswirl.

"Thank you. We appreciate this very much." Swirl thanked her. The sisters smiled at her as well before they went into the room to rest. The mare looks at me nervously and led me to the last room.

"The only room big enough left is this one." She stood by the plain white door. I reached out a talon to open it, but I stopped when she flinched. Instead I tried to use my telekinesis to open it. After a moment of concentration a black aura appeared around the handle. Giving it a twist, the door swung inwards to reveal a standard hotel room....for this time period. No plumbing and all that. Still had a bathroom, sink, and bedroom/living room. The mare looked around the hall for a minute before looking back at me. "Did you open the door?"

"Chirp." I nodded my head. Her eyes got a little wider for a moment before she remembered something.

"Oh! Right. You'll have to share this room with that pegasus from earlier. This is the only room I have left at the moment. Some ponies came into town yesterday and are using the other rooms." Yay.... I didn't really mind. I would most likely be gone for a few hours anyway. I was getting hungry.

"Chirp!" I bowed my head at her in thanks. She quickly, and excitedly, walked away to the front desk. I looked at the room then shook my head and closed the door. I would rest later. I wasn't really tired. I went down the hall and to the front room. Nodding to Tidy on the way out, I opened the front door and took off into the sky. Soaring away from the town was hard to do without attracting attention. Ponies below looked up as I flew by. I focused for a moment and my feathers appeared to burst into fire. I smirked as I heard several gasp from below. *I am fire. I am death.* I joked with

myself.

Soon enough the town disappeared and was replaced by forest. Keeping an eye out, I searched for anything to eat. *It's been awhile since I last ate. Or slept.* Pondering over my situation, I spotted something small moving through the woods below. I looked closer to see a white bunny running through the woods. I swooped down towards him as quietly as I could. Which was apparently pretty quiet. "KEEEEEEEAAR!!!" I cried as I sunk my talons into it, blackening the flesh with frostbite. Sinking my beak into the dead animal was like a knife through hot butter. It tasted just as good as the last rabbit I ate. Some part of me was a little disturbed by eating raw rabbits. But it was quickly shoved aside. The red meat tasted amazing and I made short work of it. Leaving the pile on bones where they were for some animal to find, I took off. I flew back towards town until I noticed I had some blood on my beak. Diving down into a passing river quickly solved that problem. I resumed my journey back to the inn and spotted Misty going through town. She was heading to a building that was spewing smoke from a large chimney. *Must be the blacksmith. I'd like to see that actually.* Deciding to take a small detour, I headed down to meet up with Misty. She jumped a little as I landed beside her.

"Jeez! Fly a little louder would you? I'm gunna have a heart attack." Misty scolded me. I smiled and just pointed at her leg. "Oh yeah, the doctor fixed it up! Good as new! The unicorns have one thing going for them, and that's magic. It has its uses."

"Chirp?" I pointed at the blacksmith.

"Yeah, I wouldn't mind some company. I'm just going to get my blades repaired." She opens her wing and showed her broken wing blades underneath. "Yeah, they took a beating. But they've been with me forever. So I'm not getting new ones till I destroy these." She smiled at the blades. *She must really like those blades.*

We walked up to the entrance of the blacksmith. Loud bangs and clangs came from inside. The banging was followed by a loud hissing. Like water getting put on a fire. Misty knocked on the door and a voice yelled out. "Just a minute! I'll be right there." A moment later a large earth pony opened the door. He narrowed his

eyes at Misty, and narrowed them even more when he saw me.
“What do you want?”

“Well you see. I was hoping to get my wingblades fixed-.”

“No.”

“What?” Misty got an angry look on her face.

“I said no. I ain’t fixing no blades for a pegasi and her weird pet. Now get going.” He said before slamming the door. *PET!? Oh come on! Where has this guy been the last few hours?* I walked up to the door, raised a talon and beat the door half to death. The same earth pony opened the door. “Now I’ve done said no!! Take your business else where!” I glared at him and levitated the wings blades over to me. “No.” He looked at Misty. “Now get your freaky bird away from here. Before I call the guard.”

“Oh come on!!” Misty was furious. “At least let us talk!!”

“I’m not fixing anything for a pegasus. Not ever.” The earth pony stated. Misty got a contemplative look on her face.

“What if we just used your forge? You wouldn’t have to do anything.” Misty asked. The earth pony thought about it.

“I don’t see why not. Good luck finding someone to work it though. I’m the only pony in town who knows how.” He smirked. “Now go on! Unless you find someone to work the forge your not allowed in here!” He promptly slammed the door.

“Great. How are we going to find someone to work the forge.” Misty looked around irritated.

“Chirp.” I pointed towards the inn. From what I remembered Silver Anvil was a blacksmith.

“Your right! Silver! I’m sorry for all the times I called you a feather brain in my head!” She took off towards the hotel. *Im not sure whether to be insulted or not.*

An hour later saw us knocking at the door again. “Now Look here. I said don’t come back till you found a smith!”

“We did! This here is Silver Anvil. He was a smith back at my town!” Misty introduced Silver. Silver waved shyly at the big stallion.

“All right, fine. I suppose a deals a deal.” He visibly deflated. “It’d probably be quicker to just let you get it over with. Darn stubborn pegasi.” He moved aside and let us into the building. “But if you leave a mess, or break my tools, I’m billing you! With that he walked off to sit and grumble behind the main counter. We continued into the back of the shop where the big forge was.

“Here’s my blades Silver. Take care of them.” Misty gave her wing blades to Silver. A smile came onto his face as he took them in his magic. At the same time, half the tools lit up with his magic and the forge burst to life. He stuck the blades into the fire for awhile before pulling them out red hot. Tools began to fly around the room as he looked through them and chose which ones he would need.

Something tells me this is going to be interesting.

Author's Notes:

Sorry this chapter took so long. I was sick, and distracted. Also, can anyone give more bird noises than cow, Chirp, and KEEEEEAR. It gets a little old. I would prefer predatory bird noises. Was the chapter good?

Feathers

Watching Silver repair the blades was amazing. He pounded on the red hot metal with different tools. Fixed cracks and dents, even forging a new half for the broken blade. *This is awesome! Never thought I'd get to see something like this.* Me and Misty watched from the side of the shop as Silver worked at the forge. A few times the big stallion that owned the shop would come check on us, but other than that we were left alone. We learned the shop owners name was Heavy Set. I read it on a sign he had in the back. 'Heavy Set's Tools'. It looked like an old business sign. "So, how much longer will this take?" Misty asked for the fifth time. She fidgeted beside me as I sighed. *Be patient!!*

"Caaw!" I shouted at her. I glared as she shrunk a little.

"Ok ok. I'll be quiet." She stopped talking.....for five seconds. "So, how long does this USUALLY take?" Silver sagged a little as my feathers flashed red.

"Hey!" I looked up to see Heavy standing in the door way. "Do that again." I looked around and then pointed at myself. "Yes you." I shrugged and flashed my feathers red again. "How do you do that?"

"Chirp"

"Hmmm. Here, try this." Heavy handed me a quill and some paper. *Uuuuh. How, do I use this.* I looked up at him. "Oh right. Here." He pulled an ink pot from....somewhere. *That didn't help.* I decided to bite the bullet and just try it. Levitating the quill, I dipped it in the ink. I started writing on the paper, and the result was surprisingly good. 'Magic.' Heavy looked at the paper and then back at me. "I know that ya dumb bird!" He face hoofed. Grumbling, he walked up to me and plucked a feather.

"Caaaw!!" I yelled at him.

"Oh hush ya baby." Heavy looked closely at my feathers.

"Hmmm, this might work."

“What?” Misty flew up, to look over his shoulder. “All I see is a magic feather.”

“That right. Magic.” Heavy glared at her. “I’m sure a guard pegasi has heard of enchanted weapons before. Unless the pegasi have lowered their guards standards even more.” Misty glared at him, puffing out steam.

“Why you little!” Misty looked ready to charge at him. I cleared my throat and tapped his shoulder.

“Chirp?” I pointed at the feather.

“Ah, yes.” Heavy turned towards me. “You see, I had tha chance to work with a phoenix feather a long time ago. Very rare, very special. Tha properties it put in the metal were nothing short of amazing. Steel was ten times stonger. It’s cuts burned and the blades never dulled. I was simply thinking about what your feather could do.” He got a contemplative look. “I think-.” He hesitated a moment. “I’ve heard of phoenixes before.” He continued. “But I’ve never heard of a creature like you. And if I got one chance in my life to work with a Phoenix feather, well, I’ll probly never get another chance for one of yours.” He stopped and looked directly at me. “I’d be willing to forge anything you want, if you’d let me have some feathers to work with. I would love to forge some enchanted weaponry again.” He looked longingly at the feather for a moment before his face hardened and he looked back at me. “Well? What do you say?” *Anything I want? For some feathers? That sounds like a good deal to me.*

“Crrrrrrr.” *Ooh, that’s a new one.*

“I’ll take that as a yes?” Heavy looked hopefully at me. I nodded my head. “Great! I’ll just get these down to the smeltery!” With that he reached over and yanked a few more feathers from me.

“Caaaw!!” He ran out of the house looking like a kid that just got candy. *I’m going to be featherless if this keeps up.*

“Sooooo, now you two are business partners?” Misty had an extremely confused look on her face. “It seems like you got a really

good deal. And I thought he was just a jerk.” Silver continued to hammer away in the back ground. Until he stopped anyway. Suddenly my wings were extended and a measuring tape held up to them.

“Chirp?” I looked over my shoulder at Silver.

“Keep still.” Silver surprised us by talking. *When the mute pony speaks, it must be important.* I stood as still as possible until he let my wings down and went back to hammering.

“Chirp?” He didn’t respond to my questioning bird noises. Instead he just kept hammering. I looked over at Misty.

“Do I look like a mind reader? Come on, I wanna see what’s happening at the Smeltery.” With that, Misty flew out the door. Literally.

“Hurry up! Geez!” Misty shouted from the doorway. I gave her an irritated look as I waited for the elderly pony in front of me to move. When they were out of the way I walked up to the Smeltery entrance. “About time.” Misty flew in ahead of me. I walked in just in time to hear Heavy talking to someone in the back.

“Is it ready?” Heavy asked.

“Would you calm down ya youngster. This takes time ya know.” An old mare replied. Me and Misty entered into the back room in time to see an earth pony mare carry a cast iron pot of molten metal over to Heavy. “There. That should work jus fine. Now mah payment? Steel isn’t cheap to make ya know. Especially this pure.”

“Yeah, here ya go Hilda.” Heavy hoofed over a good sized bag of what I’m assuming was bits. “Now, let’s get this started.” Me and Misty watched from the back as Heavy dropped one of my feathers into the red metal. Even Hilda watched with interest. Heavy grabbed a long metal rod from a rack and began to stir the feather in. Once it was completely submerged, a flash of blue light erupted from the pot. “Quick! Grab me those molds!” He pointed at me. I looked around the room until I found an open container full of

molds. I flew over and grabbed them with my claws. Carrying them over was a chore, they were very heavy. "Thank you. Now back away please." He shooed me away. He placed the molds he needed on the floor and began to pour the metal into them. The metal cooled unnaturally quick, and was left a silvery blue color. "Amazing. I can't wait to see what this stuff does."

"You don't know what it does? But you made it? What if it, blows up or something?" Misty asked. Heavy's happy look was replaced with one of irritation.

"That's not how this type of enchantment works. One would think that a pegasus would know that. Especially one with a military background like yer's." Heavy responded. "I'll be at the forge if you need me. Trying out this new metal. Maybe make you a REAL pair of wing blades." Misty's face turned red with anger at that comment.

"You little!" She flew after him. Only to hit the door when he shut it. "Aaarrrrgh!! I wanna kill him!" She kicked open the door and flew off to the hotel. I looked at the mare still in the room with me.

"You've got yer self quite the group yungun. Hehe. Hope you can rein em in." Hilda chuckled to herself as she walked further into the building. *You have no idea. Now, after that ridiculously cool display, I think I'm going to sleep.* With that, I flew on to the hotel. *Can't wait to see what that metal does.*

Author's Notes:

So, how was this chapter? I'm aware that submission times are getting further and further apart. I'm going to try and fix that. Also, Point out any spelling and grammar mistakes I make. Spell check helps me sometimes, and hurts me others.

Scry

BANG BANG BANG. *What the heck!?* I shot up in the bed and looked at the door.

“Night! If you don’t open up right this second imma gunna bust the door down and pluck you bare!!” Heavy yelled through the door. *What?* I looked out the window to see it was still night time. Midnight judging by the moons position. *Alright. Let’s get this over with. I was almost asleep.* I walked over to the door and opened it with an unamused look on my face. “Look at this!! Isn’t it magnificent!!” He shoved a blue silver sword into my face. I looked at the weapon unamused and then pointed out the window.

“Chirp.” I glared at Heavy.

“Pssshh, who needs sleep when there’s forging to be done!? Especially with metal such as this!”

“Shut up you idiot!! We’re trying to sleep here!!!” Someone yelled from down the hall.

“What is going on!?” Misty groaned from the roof. We looked up to see her looking over the edge of her cloud bed. “Can’t you two be quiet!?” With that she rolled over and attempted to go back to sleep. Heavy had the decency to look sorry for a second before he turned serious again.

“After I forged a sword I decided to conduct an investigation as to identify tha properties of the metal.”

Flashback

“Hah!! Take that ya scurvy dogs!!” Heavy sliced a block of wood with the sword, shattering it into frozen pieces. “Avast maties!! Take arms against these pirates!!” Another block of wood fell. “Hahah!!! Take that you dastardly fiends!!” One more block of wood. “Hahaha!! Hahahahahaaaaa!!!” Heavy stood in the middle of

fifty broken wood blocks. All murdered in cold blood.

Present

“Anyways, after ah pla- TESTED the sword I didn’t have much else to do. So I started thinking about how hungry I was, which led to carrots. And that led to radishes, which led to the pretty mare that owns the fruit stand in the market.” I stared at Heavy. “Anyways, I was thinking about that mare, and THIS happened.” He held up the sword for me to see.

After a moment of nothing happening I was about to send him away. Until the surface of the blade shimmered. Once it cleared, it showed a mare sleeping in a bed somewhere. *What!? That’s amazing!!..... Can I do that? Wait a minute.* I gave Heavy a disapproving glare. “What!? I didn’t see anything I didn’t want to see!” *That was literally the least reassuring thing I’ve ever heard anyone ever say.* Shaking my head at him I looked stretched out one of my wings and looked at it. *Maybe...* I concentrated on what I wanted to see, and after a moment an image of a sleeping Luna appeared on my wing. *Oh that is amazing.*

“Chirp!” I excitedly showed him my wing.

“Really? Of all the things you could scry, you chose tha little filly next door? Bah, your no fun.” Another glare went Heavy’s direction. “Welp, I’m gunna go back ta playi-testing the sword at my shop. See ya around.” With that he walked out and I shut the door behind him. While that could have waited till morning, I was glad he decided to show me now. *Now I have something to do tonight.* Apparently, space hawks didn’t sleep often. Which left me to stay awake all night. While I would have loved to be able to do that at home, I didn’t have internet here. So I had nothing to entertain myself with.

“Is he gone?” Misty looked over her cloud.

“Chirp.”

“Good. At least your quiet.” Misty rolled back over, and soon light

snores filled the room. *Well, let's see what I can do.* With that, I started trying to scry on everything I could think of. I was met with much disappointment when I couldn't scry home. *Dang it!* I tried scry the sisters and they came into view on my wing, along with Starswirl. I even tried scrying some timberwolves. When nothing appeared I got confused. *Maybe I need to be more specific?*

This time I looked for the **closest** timberwolf. Imagine my surprise when a wolf appeared on my wing....right outside of town. I jumped up, ready for to run out the door. But I stopped when several arrows hit it and it fell apart. In the distance a few ponies cheered on the border of the town. *Wow, good shot.* Then I got an idea. What if I looked for the shadow creature? I got a little excited as I started to concentrate. After a moment of nothing happening I tried harder. Slowly but surely, an image came onto my wing. *WHAT THE-!!!* I froze as I saw the monster looking right at me. It walked closer to me. And closer. It sniffed at me as it stood right on the other side of my wing. Slowly the image on my wing dripped down my feathers and onto the floor. There the drops pooled together until they made a puddle showing the creature. It seemed to smile sinisterly before it slowly reached forward.

“KEEEEEEEAR!!!!” I shrieked when it's paw started to come through the puddle. I heard fumbling around from the rooms across the hall, but I knew they wouldn't get here in time. I tried to close the portal by ending the scry. But it wouldnt respond. I tried harder and harder. By now the creature had got all of one front leg in. Right as it tried to slash forward at me, a lot of things happened. The door burst open as the paw flew at me. Misty finally got up and saw what was happening. And I managed to close the portal.

“SCREEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE!!!!” The sound came from impossibly far away, yet seemed as clear as day. Everyone was froze as we stared at where a single black paw lay.

“What in the world is going on!?” Starswirl asked angrily. Not that I could blame him.

“It's ok, it's ok. It's not here. It's not really here.” Misty sat in the corner whimpering to herself. The sisters were behind Star, looking terrified. And I was in the middle of the room next to the paw. *What*

*did I **do**?* I asked myself as I stared at the disembodied limb. *I have a bad feeling about this.* I quoted.

Consequences

We all stared at the limb on the floor. It still twitched from time to time as a mist of shadows seeped out of it. “Do I even **want** to know?” Bullseye asked as he stood in the doorway.

“Probably not.” His sister answered. Everyone one flinched as the leg twitched once again. Misty was rocking back and forth in the corner and muttering to herself. I slowly left my spot on the floor and sat beside her. As I wrapped my wing around her she leaned into me and stopped shivering.

“I don’t even know what to say!!” Starswirl looked furious and confused. “Why would you be so reckless!” I opened my mouth to explain but remembered that wouldn't work. I sighed and levitated a piece of paper and an inkwell from a desk in the corner. I pulled out a feather and dipped it in ink. ‘I didn't mean to! I just meant to find it.’ I wrote. Starswirl sighed and rubbed his forehead. “Ok, ok. It was a mistake. You didn't know it could do that. And I didn't tell you.” He looked back at the limb on the ground and rubbed his head again. “We need to get rid of this before someone finds it.” Starswirl's horn lit up and with a POP the limb disappeared. “There! Now it’s gone. I’m going back to bed. We leave early tomorrow.” With that he walked back to his room. Celestia nervously followed him while Luna came over to me.

“It's ok. It was an accident!” She hugged me then hurried out the door. *Adorable.*

“Soooo. Ya need anything?” Bullseye asked awkwardly. I just shook my head and he and his sister walked out the door.

“What happened!?!? Is everything....ok?” Healing and Lavender stopped at the door and stared at the mess in the room. Me practically cradling Misty, the scratches on the floor, and the small spots of dark blood. “What happened!?” Lavender screeched.

“Sorry it took us so long, we were at the other end of the building.” Healing apologized. “Are you hurt?” I shook my head. “And her?”

Again, I shook my head. "Do you need anything? All we heard was screaming." I simply waved to the door and lay my head on the wall. "Ok. Ok, try to get some sleep. Tell us what happened in the morning." They left slowly, looking unsure about leaving. *This is gonna be a long night.*

Sometime during the night i realized something. I missed video games. There's only so much you can do for a whole night while you're holding someone else. Speaking of someone else. Misty had finally fallen asleep. I guess she was more shook up about the attack on the town than we knew. A lot more. She cried for a long time before she started just sniffing. That town was her home, and the thing destroyed it. *I would be pretty sad to.* I had rocked her to sleep, so now all I could do was stare at the wall and drift through my thoughts. And even that wasn't entertaining. *Oh my god...I have never wanted the sun to rise more than I do now.* Such a long night ahead....

Author's Notes:

Featured 4/7/18

So I have to say. I am super disappointed with myself. I tried to get this out earlier but I just couldnt figure out what to right for this part. So in the end I just said 'Good enough' and finished it. Sorry for the long wait people.

Farewell

We left early that morning. To early for everyone except Starswirl. “I would love to be SLEEPING right now!! But Instead we’re walking through the woods at-“ Bullseye looked at the sky. “-At too early!!”

“Would you PLEASE stop complaining.” Swirl asked from the front. “I assure you I am more tired than you, so I would like a little calm for a few hours. If at all possible.” Starswirl had an irritated expression on his face. He had his horn lit, and was waving his head back and forth. It seemed to glow brighter every time he pointed it West. He turned to walk in the direction it glowed the brightest.

As we all followed him I felt a tap on my shoulder. I looked over to see Silver holding a bag out to me. I grabbed it in my magic and was surprised by the light weight of the large bag. “For you.” That was all he said before he fell to the back of the group again. I looked at the bag, then at Misty. She was under my right wing. She was still shook up. Not as bad, but she shivered every once in a while.

“-My opinion, Aloe and Honey is the best treatment for burns.” Lavender said.

“Well, yes. But that’s not counting magic. Magic is better than any natural remedy by a long shot.” Healing responded.

“But in the case your magic doesn’t work? Or there’s no unicorns?”

“Then yes, I have to agree. Honey and Aloe ARE very good remedies.” Healing responded. It was good to hear a calm conversation between two beings comparing notes. We hadn’t had much calm in the past few days.

“Can you get off of me? I’m hot.” Misty whispered from beside me. I looked over and immediately took my wing off her. Luna came running up to us and looked at Misty.

“Are you better Misty?” She asked in her cute, innocent voice. “I hope so. Other wise, who is Night gunna fly With? He likes flying a lot, and so do you!” Misty showed a small smile at that and nodded.

“Yes, I’m a little better. I just need a little rest.” Luna ran off happily to see Swirl, and likely update him on Misty’s condition. It hurt me to see the normally proud pegasus brought so low. “I’m sorry Night, I shouldn’t have let you see me like this.” I shook my head at her.

“Purrrrrrrr.” I let out a comforting noise. I think.

“I just got emotional after being so close to that...thing.” She shivered again and I started to extend my wing. She shied away from me and continued. “It killed them. All the other guards. Ponies I’d known for most of my life. And the Captain...” She let out a sob and fell into me. “It ate the Captain. She was like my mother. She had always been there for me, and I couldn’t save her.” She started sobbing into my feathers. I slowed down a little and squeezed her with my wing.

“Will she be ok?” Stone asked. She and everyone else had slowed down with me and had grim expressions. I just looked at Misty. I couldn’t answer even if I HAD an answer. We all just walked slowly toward wherever we were going.

Misty had long stopped crying. Now she was just wrapped under my wing as we walked through the woods. We seemed to be endlessly walking, just trees ,trees , and more trees. We didn’t hear anything nor see anything in the woods. Just the sound of hooves and breathing. *Where are we going?* “Chirp!?” I called up to Starswirl, who was in deep concentration. I promptly got a scroll and ink well thrown in my face. After rubbing my sore beak, I glared at Swirl as I pulled out a feather. *I’m going to be featherless at this rate.* ‘Where are we going?’ I wrote down. I threw the rolled up scroll into the back of Swirl’s head.

“Hey!” He hollered back. I just looked innocently at the sky. “Darn avian.” He looked at the scroll and facehoofed. “I have NO idea. Ok? I am just following an obscure trail of magic that is miles away,

and several days old, through a forest I do not know, leading to a place I do not know.” Ok then. He has no idea. “Is there anyway you can fly up and look around? That would be wonderful.” He said in a tired voice. I looked down at Misty, and she looked back up and nodded. With a sigh I took off to scout around.

As I rose up into the air, I noticed that there wasn’t much besides trees in the area. It’s was also turning dark quickly. In the coming darkness my eyes started playing tricks on me. I saw dark shapes moving in the corner of my eyes, only to see nothing when I turned to look. *HA!* I whipped my head to look at what I was sure was movement. *Oh. Nothing.* A few more minutes went by with me seeing things. *HA! Oh, never mind.* This cycle repeated itself as I slowly went stir crazy. I started getting twitchy as I tried to look everywhere at once. *HA!!* I swung around to look at a shadow. *Oh, there’s not-* “KEEEEEAAAR!!!” I dove down as the movement kept going in the woods breaking through the tree tops, I landed on the back of a.....nothing. There was nothing. I quickly took off and frantically made my way back to the group.

I landed with a thump beside the group. The others jumped at my landing while I looked around for Swirl. “You noticed to?” Swirl asked.

“Chirp!” I nodded frantically as I jumped at every rustle of leaves.

“What? What did he notice?” Bullseye asked nervously. As Swirl started to answer, Misty interrupted him suddenly. With a barley perceptible voice, she answered Bullseye’s question.

“We’re being followed.”

Author's Notes:

[A little music to set the mood for the ending.](#) Yay! I barely broke the 1000 word marker in this chapter. So, how was it? I’m sorry for the long wait. I’ve been distracted lately.

Darkness

We tried to walk as far as we could through the forest, but eventually we had to rest. With the ever present 'twitchy shadows' no one was going to sleep. But at least we could all sit down around the fire for awhile. Well, if we HAD a fire. That's what we were currently working on. "There! That should be plenty of wood for a fire! Light it up Swirly!" Stone Slab told Starswirl.

"If you ever call me 'Swirly' again....I don't know what I'll do but you won't like it." Swirl tiredly spoke back. With a strained face, and a few seconds of effort, a spark jumped from Swirl's horn and lit the pile of wood. The logs and twigs quickly caught fire and lit the area.

With the immediate area lit up our group relaxed a little. Just a little. "So, do you have any idea what those things are out there?" Healing asked Starswirl.

"Irritating." Bullseye stated flatly.

"No, I don't. Why do you think I would know?" Swirl asked.

"Well, you just seem well traveled. And you know some things other unicorns don't, like that spell you saved us with." Healing answered. "And I'm just trying to start a conversation. It would be much less stressful if we were talking."

"Chirp!" I agreed. I was extremely stressed right now.

"Ooh Ooh! Could we play a game!?" Luna asked adorably. Meanwhile Bullseye was chucking random sticks and stones into the woods. This stopped when a stone came back out and hit him in the head.

"Hey!!" He yelled, grabbing our attention. "Your gunna pay for that!" He picked up a random object around him, which happened to be an apple, and threw it into the woods. It seemed to disintegrate as it touched the darkness. Bullseye quickly sat down and scooted

away from the shadows. “Yeah! I’ll teach you that lesson later!! Just wait!”

“Hey! That looks fun!” Luna picked up a berry from a bush, and threw it into the woods. Again it disintegrated as it touched the shadows. *It’s like that one Doctor Who episode.* I pondered the similarities for a minute before Swirl brought me from my thoughts.

“Luna! Stop! We don’t know what’s out there. We don’t want to antagonize it.” Swirl grabbed the berries from Luna and brought them to the fire. “Besides, we can eat these for dinner.”

“Ok, fine.” Luna huffed. “I wanna play a game though.”

“What do you want to play Luna?” Celestia asked.

“I don’t know.....Ooh! Maybe Night knows a game!” Luna pointed at me. Swirl hid a laugh and looked at me.

“Well Night? Do you know any games?” Swirl chuckled at me. *I know **lots** of games. I just don’t have anything to play them on.* It would be nice if I had my PlayStation. Or iPad. *Hey! Maybe I can make a game with these!* I looked at my feathers. *Of course I can. Magic can do anything!* It probably couldn’t actually do anything. But a man bird thing can dream!

“Caw!” I announced at Swirl.

“Here! I brought parchment for a reason you know. For you to write on.” Swirl pulled some paper from his saddle bag and tossed it to me. I caught it in my magic and pulled out a feather. I looked expectantly at Swirl and he sighed before tossing me an inkwell. *Thank you.* ‘As a matter of fact, I **do** know a few games.’ Now I just needed to think of one to play on feathers. *Maybe spot the difference? A jigsaw puzzle? No, I’m too tired for that right now. I haven’t had **that** much practice.* “Well? What games do giant birds play?” Swirl asked with a hint of actual curiosity. I grabbed the parchment and wrote ‘Spot the difference.’ I opened my wings and laid back. On both wings I made an identical image of an underwater scene. I put some fish in and a few old looking wrecks. But of course, each picture had a few small things different in it.

"That's sounds fun!" Luna rushed up and stepped on my wing to get a closer look. I winced and Celestia pulled her off.

"Hmmm. This could be interesting. Let's try to find everything Luna." Celestia sat down by my head and looked at my wings. Luna sat down beside her And scrunched her face in concentration.

"There! This picture has a small blue dish at the bottom. The other one doesn't."

"Wow! Your good Tia!" Luna exclaimed. I made the fish flash before it faded out of the picture. "Hmmm. There! That ship wreck has two.....things. The other one only has one!"

"That's a mast Luna. It holds the sail." Explained Celestia. I made the extra mast flash before fading away. While Luna and Celestia played the game, I grabbed the bag Silver had given me earlier. *What secrets do you hold?* I opened the bag and levitated the contents out. My eyes widened at the beautiful wing blades that slipped out. *Woah!* They were a silvery blue color, and they looked sharp enough to split a hair. The blades were segmented where they covered the alula so it could still move, and they only went from the elbow out. "Wow! Did you make those Silver!?" Celestia turned to look at Silver, who nodded shyly. Luna was looking at her reflection in one of the blades while I put on the other one. It slid over my wing snugly and wrapped around the bones slightly so it didn't fall off.

"Aaaah. That was fun!" Luna said as I took the other blade and put it on as well. They both fit perfectly and I looked over at Silver with a thankful look in my eyes. "Thank you." I wrote on the paper. *I wonder...* I concentrated on what I wanted and the blades shimmered for a second. When the shimmering stopped, the blades showed Starswirl by the fire. "Hey!! That's Starswirl! How'd he get in there!?"

"Hmmm. So that's what Heavy was yelling about. That is really something." Swirl said as he looked at me from his spot by the fire. "Even more interesting is the fact I can't feel myself being scried. Everyone working for the Unicorn University was trained in Scy detection."

“You can’t detect it Starswirl? But your the most powerful wizard ever!” Celestia said in disbelief.

“Hah!!” Swirl laughed. “I am by no means the most powerful wizard. Nor am I **close** to being the most powerful. The unicorns who raised the sun and moon? Now **they** were powerful. And there are other unicorns not as powerful as them, but still more so than me.”

“Then how do you do all of your amazing spells!? You must be powerful to make all these new ways to use magic!”

“Because, the powerful unicorns who had high positions in the university were stupid. They saw no need to make new magic. They were powerful with the spells they had, so why make more. They saw no need for improvement.” Swirl looked into the fire. “I had the honor of working with some of the elder magicians. Nothing serious, just organizing papers, helping with formulas. I tried many times to tell them there were other ways to use magic. But I was not at their level of strength, so I knew nothing. Or so they thought. So I tried to show them a new spell I made.” Swirl looked saddened for a moment. “They got rid of me after that. So I left the unicorn capital and set out to explore the world. And make new spells along the way.”

“I’m sorry.” Celestia said.

“It is not your fault. It is mine for thinking everyone wants to learn new things.”

“Well, they weren’t smart!” Luna shouted “They lost the best wizard ever!”

“Uh, guys?” Bullseye said. “I may or may not have hit something and made it angry.” We all looked over to see the darkness slowly closing in. The camp fire stopped producing light even though it was still lit. Kind of like in the hobbit, when Gandalf gets mad in Bilbo’s house and the lights dim. Except more terrifying because it was **actually happening**.

“What did you do!?” Swirl yelled.

“Uuuuh. Throw a large rock at a snapping twig?” Bullseye looked guilty. “I panicked ok!?”

“I’m not comfortable with how close it is!!” Lavender yelled. Suddenly the darkness surged forward and the others all screamed. I was thrown to the ground by something and landed on my back. A dark silhouette stood over me. It seemed to open its mouth before throwing its head forward to bite my neck. Or it would have if a tendril of shadow didn’t slap it across the face.

“No!” Luna yelled as she slapped it again. “I’m not losing my friend again!” She slapped it again as it seemed to be stunned. The slap seemed to bring it back to reality and it made several high pitch squeaking sounds before it flew off, with the sound of others leaving as well. As soon as their wing beats disappeared the area around the fire lit up again like someone flipped a switch.

“What was that!?” Stone slab asked loudly. ‘I’m done with this forest.’ I wrote on the paper.

“I with you there.” Healing responded.

“I do not know. But as soon as the sun rises we are leaving.” Swirl stated. *This is gunna be a long night.*

Author's Notes:

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=uxJQmtCyi3M>

Watch this to clear up any confusion about where the wing blades cover. So! How was this chapter? I had to write this one down, it was killing me. Also, would anyone be interested in drawing me a picture of Nightwing diving at a timber wolf? That would be awesome!

Goodbye Forever

“Goodbye forever!!” Bullseye yelled at the forest happily. We made it out of the dark forest early in the morning. Now the trees were much thinner. The sun was just barely above the horizon and the sky was almost cloudless.

“I have to agree with you there brother.” Stone slab responded, “I’ll be happy if we never have to go in there again.” She shivered a little.

“It wasn’t so bad!” Luna said.

“Says the mare who can control shadows. In a dark forest.” Healing stated.

“Where did you learn that spell Luna?” Swirl asked.

“Night was reading about it when he watched me! It was really boring.”

“You need to be careful Luna. You may not be ready for all the spells in those books yet. You may get hurt.” Celestia looked at Luna with a worried expression.

“I must agree with your sister, I have seen many injured unicorns come into my home. A lot of them hurt by spells they weren’t careful with.” Lavender explained.

“Yes Luna, while we are grateful for you saving Night, please only use unfamiliar spells in a emergency.” Swirl looked back at Luna. “Ok?” Luna looked at the ground.

“Yes Starswirl.” Luna walked over to me and leaned against me as we walked.

“Hey.” Misty whispered to Luna. “I think you did great. Better than most mages I’ve seen.” Luna perked up and smiled at her.

“Thanks!”

"No problem kid." Misty leaned back against me, looking a little happier. I grabbed some writing supplies from Swirl's bags and wrote 'any idea where we're going?' I floated it over to Swirl for him to read.

"No, I have no idea. I am simply following this magic trail." Swirl looked thoughtful for a moment. "However, judging by the wound you inflicted on the creature, we may be headed to its home. Which means we will be at a disadvantage." He opened up his bags. "However." He smirked for a second. "We have these." He pulled out the Elements. They shimmered almost happily in the early morning sun. Six gems, all perfectly cut and sized. I just had one question. 'Where did they come from?' I asked in the scroll. "They were a gift from harmony itself. They come from a crystal tree, one I have studied and determined to be a manifestation of harmony. We were lead to it by a strange magic signature after Discord's reign started. It gave us these gems as a weapon against him. And now I plan for us to use them against the beast." *And now I know how the Elements were found. If only I could brag about this back home.* Swirl looked around for a minute before saying something else. "Can you scout the area and see what is around? I do not want to stumble upon anything dangerous." Nodding to him I took off and rapidly climbed into the sky. After a minute or two a second pair of wings joined my own.

"I figured I'd join you. You know, to make sure you don't miss anything." Misty smiled thinly at me. I smiled back as much as a bird could. Which was a lot in Equestria.....apparently.

We soared in the air as we scouted around. A few squirrels and rabbits here and there. A river there. A deep valley here. Nothing too interesting. I circled around the group to keep an eye out for anything dangerous. As I made a loop, I saw a darker than normal shadow further behind our group. I blinked and it was gone. *Just stay away from us and I won't mess with you.* I circled around again and continued patrolling with Misty.

After awhile of calm flying Misty flew up beside me. "Hey." She got my attention. "I wanted to say.....thanks. For staying with me and stuff. Just that helped me feel better. So. Yeah.....thanks." With a grumble she flew away to look around some more. I smiled a little

at her as she left. *No problem Misty.* I looked down at Swirl and flashed the feathers on my stomach bright green to let him know everything was good. I was feeling hungry so I veered off course and went further from the group. I scanned the trees for any small animals that I could catch. *Don't take it personally squirrel. It just business.....lord business.* I chuckled at myself as I dove down to grab the squirrel. I broke through some small branches and grabbed it off the branch before rolling along the ground. I bit into it's neck to kill it quickly. Then I dug into it as fast as I could. *This is delicious. I'm probably enjoying this to much but it's so good!* "So, you even hunt like a bird too?" Misty said from beside me.

"KEEEAAAAAR!!" *Arg!! Oh my! Yooooooooooooou scared the mess out of me!!* I held a claw to my chest and calmed myself down before glaring at her. Then I realized there was a half eaten squirrel carcass beside me and I discreetly stepped in front of it.

"What? Afraid I'll steal your squirrel? No thanks, I'll stick with whatever I threw into my bags. Something green." When I didn't move and continue eating she huffed and sat down. "I've seen a dead squirrel before. Heck, I've seen dead ponies. I'm a guard." With that she pulled of her saddle bags and set them in front of her. She opened them and pulled out an apple. She looked back up at me. "Don't let me interrupt your meal. I was just eating my own lunch." With that she laid down and began eating her apple like nothing was wrong. *Man, ponies are different now.* I hesitantly moved back and started eating what was left of my squirrel. After a few bites Misty started talking again.

"So, do you always eat squirrels? Or do you eat helpless little bunnies too?" I choked a little and she started laughing. "HA! The look on your face! I'm just messing with you, loosen up." She took a bite of her apple with a crunch and chewed as she thought of what to say next. "So, where are you from? I'm from Cloudsdale, a little cloud village in the middle of nowhere. Literally, nothing but forest for miles." Again, I choked a little. *Little village? Cloudsdale? Wow, you'd never believe what it turned into.* when I didn't answer she nodded. "Right, not a big talker. Here, I grabbed some paper." She tossed a roll of paper at me and I caught it in my kinesis. 'I'm from far away.' I sent it back to her. After reading it she huffed.

“Obviously. How far?” I put my wings together and pulled them apart in a ‘this big’ motion. “Really far huh? Maybe over the oceans? We haven’t explored over there yet. Maybe someday I’ll get to go over there. Always wanted to cross an ocean. Never had the time though.” She took another bite of apple. The last bite to be exact. “Welp, I’m done eating. See you in the sky.” She took off in a cloud of dust, leaving me to finish the last few bites of my squirrel. *Who does she remind me of?* I shrugged and finished my squirrel. I took to the sky and continued my path around our group. I spotted the shadow for a second, but it was still far away. *Sneaky little thing. Your on the other side of us now. I’m watching for you.*

Author's Notes:

Sorry this took so long guys! I got distracted playing games. So, how was this chapter, good, bad, meh?

Dark Forest

We knew we were there by the trees. On minute we were walking in a pleasant, thinly wooded area. The next the trees grew close together with barely enough room to squeeze through the. They were neither tall nor short and the trunks were black and twisted. "So uh....who wants to go first?" Stone asked.

"None of you are going." Swirl replied. "Just Celestia, Luna, and I. It's to risky to bring all of you."

"What!? You aren't gong to be able to defend yourselves in there!" Misty hollered.

"What she said." Bullseye said in the background. I don't think anyone heard him.

"At least take someone with you!" Misty yelled. Swirl looked at the ground for a moment.

"Fine. Nightwing, you're coming too." *Yay? I'm not sure if I'm supposed to be happy or not.* Misty looked a little upset at that.

"That's it? Just him?"

"Well do you want to come as well!?" Swirl glared at her. "I can not risk you freezing up in there! I am risking as few lives as possible!" Lavender took this moment to intervene.

"Misty, while I'm sure you want to go with them, Starswirl is right. You would freeze up again. And we may only get in the way!" She sent a pity filled look at Misty. "I understand you want to help. Stay here and help me get a little clinic set up. With the amount of trouble these ponies get into, we may need a whole hospital when they get back." She sent a good natured smile at us while Misty just looked at the ground in shame. "Please be careful in there. Enough lives have been lost recently."

"Too many lives. While I don't like it, I'll stay here and wait. If any

thing comes this way I'll keep them safe." Bullseye motioned at the ones staying behind.

"That's my brothers way of saying be careful. And good luck." Stoneslab smirked at Bullseye. "Show that thing what for, ya hear?"

"Indeed. And I'll be here when you all need a pain spell. I'm sure you'll be sore after this." Healing added in. Silver stood off to the side a little and smiled at us.

"Be safe." Was all he said. I noticed he looked at Celestia more than anyone else.

"Alright, we will try to be back by morning at the latest. If we are not back by then...it may be safer if you all left." With that, Swirl turned and walked into the woods.

"See you soon!" Luna happily waved goodbye before hopping into the darkness. Celestia just looked at Silver before following.

"Chirp!" I started walking into the forest before something wrapped around my neck. I looked to the side to see Misty hugging me.

"Please be safe. I would rather keep all my friends alive." With that she let go and backed away, trying to look like she didn't just hug me. "So. Yeah. You better come back safe! All of you!" She looked at the ground for a moment. "I'm getting fire wood!" With that she flew away from the dark forest to grab some wood. I waved my wing at the remaining ponies and squeezed through the outer trees.

Once inside all light seemed to disappear. I could barely see Starswirl and the sisters ahead of me. I caught up to them and enjoyed the small area of light that Swirl's horn produced. The trees on either side of us were extremely close, leaving almost no room to walk. *We won't be flying out, that's for sure.* There was next to no underbrush, only thin, dead looking bushes. No small animals ran through the woods and it seemed the whole forest was dead. Especially when Swirl's horn went out.

"What!?" Swirl looked at his horn as It started flickering. "The darkness is to strong for me to use my magic here. This forest is full

of dark magic.” He stopped for a second as his horn went out completely.

“Are you sure about this Starswirl?” Celestia asked. “Maybe we should go back and plan this better?”

“No, we need to finish this. This creature has been a scourge on the land for too long. We need to be rid of it as soon as possible.” Swirl tried to light his horn but it only shot out a few sparks. Then the breathing started. It wasn’t loud. It was almost as if the whole **forest** was breathing. A barely perceptible wave of air going into the heart of the forest, then a few seconds later coming back out. In and out. In and out. And yet it wasn’t air. None of the leaves moved and none of the bushes were disturbed. *Oh man. This just got waaaaaay too creepy.* “All that dark magic. You can physically feel it.” He shivered for a moment. “We need to hurry. If we stay too long the magic could start to effect us in...unpleasant ways.” Swirl started moving deeper into the forest with us close behind.

We stepped over dead logs laying in the path and deep holes here and there. There was no straight path through the dark. The dark wasn’t a problem for much longer however. As we went deeper a yellow light began to shine through the trees, or from the trees. I couldn’t tell. The light wasn’t much but it was enough to navigate by. And add to the creep factor. As we walked Swirl stumbled and dropped to his front knees.

“Starswirl!” Yelled Celestia.

“Are you ok!?” Asked Luna. I cringed and looked around after their loud yelling.

“I am fine. But the magic is already effecting me. I suspect you have longer due to your more durable bodies. We need to hurry.” Swirl stood back up and pushed forward once more. I moved to follow but snapped my head to the left to look through the trees. But nothing was there. *This place is terrifying.* I followed the others quickly so I didn’t get left behind.

An hour later something changed. The air got three times heavier

and the yellow light blinked out of existence. Silence filled our group as we quit walking. A shuffle sounded to the right and our heads snapped over to look. Another shuffle to the left. Another ahead of us. "Its right by us Starswirl." Celestia whispered to him.

"I know. Here." He handed them the elements and they grabbed them in their hooves. They both touched them to their horns and the Elements changed into rings that they slipped onto their horns. Three for each sister.

Luna slipped the Elements for Loyalty, Laughter, and Honesty. While Celestia put on Kindness, Generosity, and Magic. Just in time for the rustling to stop. Giant jaws leapt out of the brush to try and latch onto my neck. Suffice to say they missed.

I spun around the teeth and hit the beast on the back of the head with a wing. Then I slashed at him with my new blades. It jumped up just in time to dodge my attack. It grabbed me with it's mouth and threw me into a nearby tree. It stalked forward to finish me off and I noticed he wasn't missing a leg anymore.

Suddenly bolt of white magic hit it in the back of its head. "Foul beast!! To the grave with you!!" Again a bolt of white magic hit the creature causing him to stumble and growl. He decided that Starswirl was more important than revenge at the moment. He kept at Swirl and slapped him into the woods, out of sight. Then it leapt with open jaws at Luna.

"Never!" Celestia shouted and jumped in front of her sister. She threw up a shield that the creature face planted into. "Take that!" It did take it. Very well in fact. It almost seemed to grin as it bit into her shield. Then it made a pulling motion with it's head. "Aaah! You foul creature! It's draining my magic!"

Celestia's shield grew dimmer while the shadows leaking from the creature started whipping around with energy. Finally the shield cracked and shattered. The creature almost seemed to laugh as it's eyes began to glow a dark yellow. Celestia, too weak to evade, was hit by the giant foot of the creature. It walked up to a shivering Luna and opened up its mouth. *NOOO!!* "KEEEEEEAR!!" I shrieked as I managed to stand up and throw myself at the beast. But I was too

slow. The jaws closed around Luna's neck, getting ever closer to the skin. Until a dark blur smacked into its side.

"Squueek!!" A high pitched bat like sound came from the blur. "Have at thee creature of darkness!!" A female voice also came from the blur. *Wait. Bat sounds? Is that a-?* A dark colored pegasus stood up from on top of the beast. Except it had bat wings instead of feathered ones. The batpony pulled a sword from a sheath on its side and stabbed it into the creature. "HA!! Take that!!" The beast threw her off and lunged for her. I intercepted it much to its irritation. *How about round two buddy?*

"KEEEEEAAAR!!" I shrieked at it before I bit into its neck with my sharp beak. The area around the bite turned black with frostbite.

"RAAAAAAAAAAAAAAW!!!" The beast roared in pain. I continued my onslaught by dragging my claws through his flesh as I swung onto his back. I saw Celestia emerge from the woods and run to Luna. *Get ready you two!* I flashed my feathers green at them and continued fighting the beast onto the ground. I wrapped myself around it's legs as best I could. From the corner of my eye I saw a bright light building. I was kind of preoccupied by the teeth snapping an inch from my face. *Well, he's already mad. Yolo.* I quickly reached forward and bit into the underside of his jaw.

"Night! Move!" Celestia yelled. *Aaaand that's my cue.* I released myself from the beast and threw myself away as the light reached maximum level behind me. But the creature wasn't going down without a fight. It grabbed my leg and pulled me back onto the ground. I landed on my back so I could see the Rainbow headed for us both. *Yep. I shouldn't have expected anything else.* Then the laser hit.

Author's Notes:

Wooooo!! Finally got to the Shadow Creature! So, please leave any and all comments below!

Harmony

I woke up in the area where Twilight got alicorned. You know, the expanse of stars with the invisible floor. “So. You’ve finally done it.” A voice whispered all around me. “Thank you for destroying the darkness.”

“Who are you? Wait, I can talk! Yes! I’ve had so much I’ve wanted to say!” I shouted with joy.

“I am Harmony, I am glad to finally meet you face to face.” The voice whispered in return. “I am sorry about the circumstances surrounding your arrival. I truly am.”

“What do you mean? What circumstances?”

“Ah yesss, I almost forgot.” A thin thread light emerged in front of me and touched my head. **Rememberrrrr.**

I stood before a burning wreck on the road. The firemen had just arrived to put out the fire. The whole area was lit up in an orange glow that fought against the dark of night. *So that’s it then. Their gone.* My whole family had been in the car. I couldn’t seem to feel anything but numbness as the car burned in front of me. The hot metal hissed as the fire hoses try to put out the inferno.

A police officer came over to me with a sad look on his face, “I am so sorry for your loss. Would you like to stay and watch them get pulled out?” I didn’t think I could stand to see that. I simply shook my head. “Come on, I’ll get someone to drive you home sir.” He took me over to a police car with a women sitting in the driver seat. “This is Monica. Just tell her where you live and she’ll get you there ok?” I just nodded and slipped into the back of the car.

“What’s your address sir?” Monica asked sadly.

“4578 Maple Road.” I replied, barely above a whisper.

“You got it.”

I had been a week since the wreck. Every time I walked through the house I winced at the lack of people. *I need to get out of this house. Maybe go on vacation? I'm off of work for a month, I might as well.* Just as I went to look up vacation places on my PC, a knock came from the door. “Who could that be?” I cocked an eyebrow and made my way to the door. “Hello?” I opened the door to see a women standing there. A surprisingly tall women. I was six foot three and she stood even with me. She had pale skin and shiny blue hair. It almost looked transparent.

“Hello! My name is Harmony! Nice to see you today! Our company was simply offering these vacation slips to anyone we could find at home. We're trying to get our name out there.” She handed me a slip of paper. “In this brochure you will find several very popular locations for a vacation. And all for a low price!” She smiled brightly. “I'll just leave this brochure with you. If you want to choose a spot simply call the number on the back of the paper.” Which that she walked away.

“Well, that was convenient.” I stated after I shut the door. I went and sat on the couch while I read through the locations. And they were **really** cheap. “Twenty bucks for an island getaway? These prices are ridiculously cheap.”

After two days of holding myself back I had finally had enough. “I'm calling now!” I yelled at my hand as it refused to grab the phone. “Fine! Be that way!” I through my self forward onto the coffee table so I could grab the phone. I emerged victorious from the splintered remains of cheap furniture. I swiftly dialed the number and waited for someone to answer.

“Hello?” Someone answered the phone.

“Yes, I got your vacation brochure and I wanted to ask about it.”

“Which location would you like to ask about?” Her voice sounded familiar.

"The uh." I picked up the brochure. "The magical forest getaway." It seemed nice.

"Very nice choice! Are you sure that's where you want to go?"

"Yes ma'am."

"Wonderful! I'll send you right away!" What?

"What do you mean-" Darkness.....

My head jerked back as I remembered things I had forgotten. It felt like a punch to the gut. "I am sorry for the removal of your memories, but I need you to be undistracted while the Darkness still roamed. Alas, the memories are not all I altered. I made a few permanent changes to your mind to better inhabit a different body."

"Wha..." I had no words. This thing messed with my brain!?

"I also removed some of your....softer nature. I don't want you to starve because you feel bad when you kill animals."

"What!?"

"Oh don't worry. I didn't remove your remorse of killing things. Just unintelligent animals. And only for food. You won't enjoy killing now, if that's what you worried about." Harmony whispered at me.

"Yes, I am worried about it! What else did you change!?" *Its like a horror SciFi show, but real!*

"Nothing besides your body." The lights seemed to grow bright for a moment. "It's a fine creature I created. Alas, such a creature as you does not exist naturally. You are the only one of your kind, thus I granted you immortality. As I have now done with the heavenly sisters. Beware young one, this is both a blessing and a curse. You and yours will need to support each other."

"Why me?" I was genuinely curious.

“I needed someone with knowledge of this world. And I needed someone who would help.” She seemed to pause for a moment. “And I needed someone not attached to the world they lived in. I would never separate family or friends unwillingly. You weren’t my first choice, there were others. But they were all too attached to their life. They didn’t want to leave, not truly.”

“And I wasn’t!? How do you know!?”

“I looked into your mind. So much sadness, so many memories of a life you couldn’t have anymore. You wanted to get away from the world. Start a new life far away. So I fulfilled your wishes, I gave you a new start. I hope you make the best of it.” The voice seemed to smile. The lights began to fade around us.

“Now wake young one. You are missed.” Harmony whispered before I fell into darkness.

Author's Notes:

How was this chapter? Good bad? Both? What did you like or dislike?

The Nightmare

My vision returned slowly and my head ached. I stumbled to my feet and held a hand to my head. *Hand? Why am I confused about having a hand?* I shook my head to try and clear it, but that just made the problem worse. I fell into a tree and leaned on it for support. I could hear a crackling sound, not unlike fire. I looked toward the sound and saw a blazing forest behind me.

My head pain suddenly forgotten I ran from the fire, only to go back instead of forward. The faster I ran, the faster I went back. I grabbed tree limbs and bushes to try and keep myself from burning. But the fire won in the end and I was dragged into the inferno.

I coughed as smoke filled my lungs with the scent of burning pine. A tree groaned and fell over not far from me. Through it all I felt something pulling my attention behind me. My head began to turn of its own will, and in the middle of the inferno I saw a car.

“WAKE UP!!!” I was startled awake by a very upset gray blob. *The gray blob is talking? It must be Monday.* My irrational mind slapped a sentence together as my head fell back again. “No!” A sharp pain on my face jerked me awake. I looked up at Starswirl while I held my face with a wing. *Did you just slap me?* My eyes must have asked the same question because he stated very plainly his answer. “Yes, I just slapped you.” *Ok, now that that’s cleared up.* Fire flashed in my mind. *Huh.....* I must have froze up again because Starswirl started shaking me with his magic. “Stay with me Night! You’ve been hit by the Elements, who knows what damage you could have suffered!?” I just stared blankly at him. I grabbed a piece of paper from a nearby desk. *Oh look. We’re in a building.* I yanked out a feather without a second thought, or flinch, and grabbed an ink bottle from the same desk. I simply wrote ‘I’m fine’. I then dropped the parchment and stared at the wall.

*My family is gone. I was...I didn’t even **think** about them!!* My mind degraded further into a state of panic. *One moment I’m not even*

aware of them, and the next they're just gone! I think Starswirl was shaking me, but I didn't care. I layed back down and started to drift away. *What am I gunna do?* With that last thought my mind surrendered to sleep.

I was again rudely awoken. This time however it wasn't by a slap. It was by the sobbing of a tiny blue horse. Luna was nestled into my wing as she cried her eyes out. The room smelled faintly of flowers and I spotted a vase of flowers on the bedside table. As well as a sleeping Celestia on a cushion in the corner. Luna, though she was half asleep, seemed to be deeply distressed. Her half closed eyes were full of tears. *Oh Luna, don't cry.* I raised a wing a gently rubbed her with it. *Im fine. Don't worry.* Luna's eyes finally closed as she drifted off into sleep. Shortly after a small smile graced her lips.

As I lie down I started to think. *What am I going to do now? If Harmony is telling the truth I'm going to live for all eternity. I should have died in the crash, not live forever without my family.* I had to fight tears. *What am I without a family? I've always depended on them. And I've always been there for them. Through the good and the bad.* I thought about my mom and dad. And my brother. *I can't do this! Not forever without them!* I considered ending it there. I could simply fly up high and close my wings. But something stopped me. **You and yours will have to support each other.** Harmony's words echoed through my head. *Am I truly alone?*

I looked down at Luna, then at Celestia in the corner. I smiled a little as Celestia drooled on the pillow. *Maybe....Maybe I do have a family. It's not my biological one, and I will miss mine. But I can't leave these ponies. They've helped me, and I've helped them. And I plan to keep doing so.* I snuggled close to Luna and lay in the bed, careful not to disturb either sister. *Yes, I'm not truly alone.*

I woke to a bright light beside my head. I slowly opened my eyes to investigate the source. To my surprise it was from a unicorn horn. Or alicorn horn to be more precise. Celestia was standing on the balcony my room apparently had, and her horn was lit very brightly. Beside her Luna was standing, her horn a cool blue instead of the burning yellow of her sisters. The light outside the window

seemed to change rapidly, so I stood up and walked behind them to watch what I couldn't believe was happening. From over the hills was the sun rapidly rose to push back the night, while the night retreated to the far side of the horizon. The moon sank below the sky to rest for the day as the sun took its place high in the sky.

"Night! Your awake!" Luna exclaimed all of a sudden. "I'm so happy you're finally up!! It's been forever!"

"It has been quite some time friend." Celestia softly said. "A few weeks in fact." *Weeks?* "Starswirl said that you had magic in your mind from the Elements. He said it seemed memories had been unlocked in your mind." She paused to look at me. I flinched as I thought back to the car. Thankfully the pain was old, even though It seemed I just got the memories back. That combined with my realization the previous night caused the pain to fade to a low dull. It would hurt for a long time. But it was bearable.

'He is right.' I wrote and showed it to the sisters. 'I remember my time before I met with you all. The good and the bad.' I paused before I continued writing. 'I remember the loss of my family. But the pain is less now, so do not worry too much. Besides, i believe I may have found a new family.' I smiled at them and showed them what I wrote. Celestia sniffled before hugging me and whispering in my ear.

"Oh Night. I'm sorry to hear about your loss. And I would be honored if you considered us family."

"Yeah!!" Luna shouted. "I've always wanted another brother or sister to help me beat Tia in magic games!" I laughed as Luna showed how innocent and young she was. 'So, what have I missed?' I asked. "We have our own town now!" Luna yelled. *What!?* I choked on spit from her statement. COUGH COUGH!! I pounded on my chest with a wing.

"Haha! So easily defeated Nightwing, are you?" Celestia laughed. "Starswirl would have loved to see that." She giggled a little more before continuing. "Luna is correct, we do have our own town, small though it may be." 'How did that happen!?' I shouted on the paper. "Well you see--"

Heavy Set

Heavy Set was no fool. He knew that the bird he was business partners with wouldn't stay in his town much longer. Once they defeated this beast they were after they would leave for somewhere. But from hearsay and gossip at the local tavern, he deduced they didn't really have a home to go back to. But he had heard mention of a crystal tree. And he was going to make sure that they had a home to go back to. So he could get his feathers of course. No other reason.

So heavy made his way to where he had an old....friend, who would know where this tree was. He was an explorer type. Always sticking his nose in places it was likely to get cut off. Heavy Set arrived at the house he was looking for and promptly spun around and bucked the door open.

"Danger Seeker! Where are yah?!" Heavy yelled into the building.

"Ah!" Someone screamed in the back. "Heavy! Such a....pleasant surprise!" A pony nervously chuckled as he came into the front of his home. He was a brown pegasus with a black and gray mane.

"Yeah yeah, listen I need a, favor!" Heavy said with a smile.

"Lo-look Heavy, I already paid you back okay? You don't need to do this."

"Oh but I do. Yah see I'm looking for a certain crystal tree. And I'm sure you know of it." Heavy's smile vanished. "Now spill the beans."

"Look heavy, I just can't unless you have money. I log special locations for records, and you can't know where they are unless you pay. And I don't owe you anything anymore. So you can't make me!" Danger looked at him with a defiant glare.

"Oh really?" Heavy started to smirk. "Well then, I suppose yer right. I can't do nothin." Heavy turned to leave and Danger calmed down and gave a slightly confused smile.

“Good! Well, um, see you later I guess?” Danger just wanted Heavy to leave.

“Sure sure. But um.” Heavy’s smirk grew to epic proportions. “Apparently I won’t be able to make that next shipment of reinforced quills to you. My backs been hurting you see.” Danger’s smile immediately dropped.

“You wouldn’t dare.”

“Oh I would. I know how much you need those quills for all the notes you take. Unless of course, you want to pluck yourself bare.”

“Now, li-listen Heavy. Let’s not go crazy here.” But Heavy was already walking out. “Wait! Heavy don’t do this! Please!!” Danger ran after him. “Please stop! Don’t do-I’ll do anything! Anything!”

“Anything? Even tell me the location of a certain tree?” Danger has to think for a moment. Was it worth it? Yes. Yes it was. He need to take those notes. Needed to.

“Yes! Yes I’ll tell you!” Danger shouted. Heavy just smirked.

Nightwing

“So Heavy Set got the towns ponies inspired to build this town for us, and establish us as the rulers of the area.....apparently.” Celestia finished recounting to Nightwing. *What? Just...what?* I just sat down for a moment. “Oh! And one more thing!” Celestia looked at the door. “Sliver Wing! Please come in!” We all looked at the door as nothing happened. Celestia sighed and looked at the ground. “Luna? Could you-?” Celestia pointed at the door. *What now?*

“Silver Wing! Could you come here!? I want you to meet my other friend! I think you’ll like him!” Luna called to the door. It immediately opened to show the Batpony that helped kill the beast.

“You called your majesty?” Silver asked as she stepped into the room. Celestia just huffed while Luna laughed. I, on the other hand, was immediately on my feet. *Oh. My. God.*

I lunged at her and her eyes widened as she tried to draw her wing blades to defend herself. Alas I was too fast for her. Celestia gasped as I tackled Silver to the ground while Luna just watched with a smile on her face.

You. Are! ADORABLE!!! “EEEEEEEE!” Was the sound that came from my beak as my feathers gained a light blue tint. I ensnared the pony in my wings and squeezed her close to me as I rubbed my face on her head.

“Ah! Call off your pet! Please your majesty!” Silver pleaded with Luna. Luna however.....well she was no help.

“Hahaha!! Night likes you!!” Even Celestia was smirking.

“Please your majesty! Call off your pet!”

“Haha! Night isn’t a pet! He’s just as intelligent as you or me. And apparently he likes you!” Celestia laughed. ‘She adorable!’ I wrote on the paper. ‘Can we keep her!?’

“Well, her people are living in the caves nearby now. They have apparently devoted themselves to Luna.” Celestia explained to me. *A whole cave of adorable Bat ponies!?* Somewhere a small green alien felt a disturbance in the force.

Author's Notes:

How was this chapter? Broke the 2000 word limit!!

The Everfree

Third Person

The Everfree castle was quite the sight. It had huge stone walls with parapets and watchtowers. The brand new stone bricks were unmarred by vines or other such plants, and had an almost shiny quality to them. The walls surrounded a small village with a couple hundred houses. Heavy and the village he brought had picked up other settlements on the way, making for quite a sizable population.

The houses were mostly wood walled with straw roofs and poor quality glass windows. But there were some houses closer to the castle that were different. These houses were more like marble mansions. A few nobles from the old pony tribes had shown up. And of course they began sucking up to the princesses and building big mansions. These mansions were ridiculously over the top. They had white marble walls and gold plated roofs. Perfectly clear glass in the windows and marble columns around the outside. Fortunately there were only three, and they weren't huge compared to some things on earth. They were about three times the size of the other homes though.

Then the castle itself sat in the middle of it all. Beautifully built walls and a large front gate. It had four large towers with bridges connecting them to each other. The stone brick walls were accented by the gold roofs and silver door frames. The front gate was solid oak with silver framing the outer edges. Under the silver however was a solid iron frame to stop any sieges against the castle. The windows were large and ornate with silver plated iron frames, and large balconies for every room in the towers. The floors inside the main hall were white marble with black at the edges, where the walls met the floor. There were large white stone columns with gold spiraling around them to the roof, and a raised platform upon which sat two thrones. A large gold throne with silver accents, and a large obsidian throne with the same silver accents. The Batponies had supplied the obsidian for Luna's throne. They said that it did the night queen justice.

They weren't very happy that Luna was ruling alongside Celestia, but they grudgingly accepted when they were told that they were sisters. They were however, very happy about Night. Which made it much easier for him to get into their cave and snuggle them endlessly. Much to their confusion.

Nightwing

Give me all the snuggles!!! I shouted in my head as I attempted to strangle a Batpony in my wings. "Please let me go..." Said Batpony asked nervously. He looked all the more adorable in his bright blue armor. "Eeee!" He let out a bat squeak as I squeezed one last time before I let go to find my next victim.

"Night! Stop torturing the poor ponies!" Shouted Swirl. He held a hoof to his face as I gave him a sad look. "Please act your age." He stopped to think for a minute. "Or at least act mature. I'm not sure how old you are." *Fiiiine. I suppose I can hold for a little while...* I stepped away from a shivering guard mare. But not before giving her a look. *Ill be back for you.....* She seemed to shiver even more.

"Just...follow me Night. We have spent far too much time here as it is. We need to get you acquainted with the town. Most ponies do not even know you exist, and you were not awake for the reward ceremony." Swirl grumbled a little bit as his look soured. "Oh how I simply can not wait for the joy of introducing you to the crowds." *Ow, my feelings.* Starswirl must have realized how it sounded because he apologized. "I am sorry Night. It is just....with the arrival of the Lunar Pegasi, ponies are already on edge. They are a completely new species, to mention they possess slight dark magic." Starswirl sighed. "That alone nearly brought the ponies to a riot. I had to make a public announcement that because they are creatures of darkness the dark magic will not drive them insane." Swirl stopped to rub at his temples. "You have no idea how many questions I was asked about them sneaking into houses and drinking everypony's blood. They do not even **drink** blood. They eat FRUIT!" Swirl once again sighed. "And that was the reaction to a new herbivore species. I do not want to imagine the reaction to a new carnivorous or omnivorous species. Which ever one you are."

“Chirp!” I leaned over to comfort Swirl with a wing rub. “Puuuur!” I purred at him, trying to calm him. He just sighed again.

“Please just, don’t scare them to much.” He began to walk to the outer wall’s gate. “I know the ‘Batponies’, as you call them, love you and Luna. But normal ponies will have a much more.....unwelcome reaction to you.” The gate was open at the time so we walked on through. The gate didn’t close until nightfall, and It didn’t open until sunrise.

Already we were getting looks by the ponies walking down the roads. Yes, they even had cobblestone roads. *I’m amazed they got this all done in a month! Magic!* Several ponies went out of there way to stay as far as possible from me. *Hmmm. It appears Swirly may be right about one thing. These ponies are ready to run from me at the slightest hint of danger.* Starswirl was headed for a large stage in the main square. The main square was directly in front of the main castle door, and had most of the market stalls held in it. As we made our way to the stage ponies had already began to gather. All of them looking nervously at me.

We went around to the stairs on the side and Swirl walked up onto the stage. I followed behind, or at least tried to. The steps were a bit small for me. *Welp, more than one way to skin a cat I suppose.* I opened my wings and flapped twice to get onto the stage top. Almost all the gathered ponies took a step back and gasped. *Yes yes. I’m know I’m beautiful. No need to make a big deal about it.* I laughed at my internal monologue and stood beside Swirl as he began to speak.

“Attention fellow ponies! Today is another fine day in Equestria is it not!?” Swirl shouted at the top of his lungs. He seemed to be trying to break the ice with the crowd. “Today we have a very good friend of mine and the Princesses with us! He has been incapacitated for the last month and was unable to attend the reward ceremony!” The ponies seemed less nervous and more curious now. Why was I getting a reward they seemed to be wondering. “Nevertheless! He was instrumental in bringing down the shadow beast plaguing our lands! May I introduce Nightwing! Avian of the Night! And Princess Luna’s personal guard!” *Wait what?* The ponies all perked up at this announcement, seeming to forget most of their nervousness. “As

such I present to him a token of our thanks!” Swirl levitated up a blueish Silver breastplate that seemed made for me. “This enchanted breastplate, made of metal created from his own feathers! Crafted by our own Heavy Set! May It grant you eternal protection!” He levitated the breastplate over to me and slipped it over my chest. It seemed to lock around my neck, and gently caress my wing joints. It was made of the same material that made my wing blades, and had a small obsidian crescent moon in the center.

The ponies all cheered as me and Swirl walked away from the stage and into the castle. ‘So when did I get promoted to personal guard?’ I asked on the paper I brought with me. “Oh that was Luna’s doing. But do not worry. You will not be working alone.” Swirl opened a side door to reveal four Lunar Pegasi in the same armor I was wearing, but with silver moons instead of obsidian. And among them were Silver Wing, and the guard mare that escaped my clutches earlier. All the Batponies perked up at my entrance except those two. They knew better. They knew the carnage I was capable of committing. They shivered as I stepped into the room and locked the door. Swirl just sighed and shook his head.

Author's Notes:

Surprise chapter attack!! So how was it? This was mostly just filler.

Guard Training

Silver Wing

I sat down in the new bar and ordered a hard cider. Some drink the ponies made with apples. Of course it was a big hit with us since we loved fruit.

The bar had been constructed pretty soon after the ponies all settled down. After all, you can't have a happy town without a bar right? It was a log cabin like building, with high ceilings and a second floor. The second floor was left open in the center, so you could look down to the first floor. At the main bar, the bar tender was busily serving drinks to ponies. Of course, most of the ponies left when I sat down. Only a few remained.

"Hey Silver!" Moon beam, another Thestral, shouted to me. "What's up!?" She came and sat to my right, also ordering a hard cider.

"Oh nothing. Just trying to straighten out my neck from our new 'captain'" I replied. We thestrals were more militaristic than the ponies of the day. Thus, having the buffoon Nightwing as my captain.....it was very irritating.

"Oh give him a break!" Lunar Lotus sat on the other side of me. "He **did** help fight the shadow. And he did a lot of damage to it if the story **you** told us is true." Lotus also ordered a hard cider. It was quite popular among us thestrals. I took a sip of my drink before replying.

"Be that as it may, he doesn't act like a captain should. He has no experience, and he demands no respect. All he does is-" I shivered for a second. ".....I don't want to talk about it." I took a deep gulp of my drink.

"It's not that baaad!" Moon said from my right. "You're just a stick in the mud some times." She took a sip from her mug. "Besides, if what that Starswirl pony told us is true, he has no combat experience. Which means he did really good with the shadow." She

looked into her mug for a second before smirking at me. "Remind you of anyone else? Hmm?" She downed the rest of her drink and got up from her seat. "Think about when you were young Silver. You were almost the exact same." With that she walked out the front door just as Black Iron walked in. They exchanged a quick greeting before Moon left and Black walked over. His name was very fitting, as his mane was a pitch black color.

"By the expression on your face I assume your talking about our new captain?" Black asked as he took Moon's spot. He to ordered a hard cider. He took a drink then burped before saying anything else. "He has potential you know. Reminds me of you before you were trained. Taking on a couple bandits in the woods is no easy feat for an untrained filly." He drank some more as I stared into my mostly untouched drink. He was right of course. Night did show potential. But he had no training.

"Well, her majesty did choose him to be the leader." Lotus paused from guzzling her third mug. "Not much we can do about it." I sighed. She was right.

"There's only one thing to do then." I downed the rest of my drink in one gulp. Hoping it would lessen the sting of what I was about to say. "We'll just have to train him."

"Keeear!!" Night shouted as I struck him on the head.

"Then dodge the stick!" I yelled at him. "It's simple! Don't get hit and it won't hurt!" I swung the sword shaped stick at him some more as he futilely attempted to block with his wooden wing coverings. "You can't be a captain of anything if you fight like that!" I yelled at him again. I was pushing him in a circle around the training area. It was located inside the inner wall of the castle. It was mostly used by the Solar Guards, but that was no surprise since not many ponies wanted to guard with Thestrals. There were a few, but the Lunar Guard's numbers were much lower than the Solar Guard's.

"You can do it Night!" Shouted Moon from the edge of the circle. "Just stop being bad and you'll be fine!!" *Very helpful.*

“Keeear!” Night cried and went on the offensive. Or he tried to anyways. He lunged at me with his wing covers....and I side stepped and hit him on the head. I stopped and sighed.

“We have so far to go.” I moaned as Night stood up and started spitting dirt.

One Month Later
Nightwing

“Keeear!” I screeched at Silver.

“Then dodge the darn stick!!!” Silver yelled at me. We were in the same circle we had trained in every. Single. Day. For a month! Now our training was a favorite pass time for many of the guards on their off shifts. Even Starswirl was smirking at me from the sidelines. I suspected he just enjoyed seeing me get hit with a stick.

To be honest I was doing better. I wasn’t nearly as good as the Thestrals, but I was improving. Not every swing hit me now and I even got close to hitting Silver! I was better against the other Thestrals, but I suspected Silver had a bit more training.

She swung at me again and I managed to actually block it for once. “Good job! You finally blocked one!” She then followed up this praise with a jab to my neck. I jumped back out of the way before lunging forward to hit her. I swung at her shoulder but she dodged out of the way easily. Then she opened her own wings and flipped over me before smacking me in the back of the head. Once again sending me into the dirt. *I hate this so much.....*

Two Months Later

I dodged out of the way of Silver’s swing and swatted it into the ground with my wing. She quickly pulled her sword back to block my wing covers from hitting her. Her ears pinned down on her head as she pushed me back before take a swing at my head. I swiftly ducked under the swin to return a swipe at her.

“Your getting much better!” She stated. “But-” She ducked under my swing and jabbed the underside of my wing with here sword. “-you have yet-“ she swung again at me as I drew back. *Ouch!* The blow to my wing hurt very bad, yet I continued fighting. I pushed her back towards the circle edge as I went on the offensive. Right before she stepped out of the circle she tried to press me back. Only for me to get a wing in and hit her across the head. “-to defeat me.” She finished as she lay on the ground exhausted. Then she started to laugh.

“Finally! It took you long enough to throw me into the dirt! Three whole months and you’ve finally managed to hit me!” She laughed some more as she shakily stood up. “I have to say, you have a mean right wing.” She winced as she held her head. “Okay, we’re done for today.”

“Chirp?” I asked her.

“I’ll be fine!” She waved me off.

“Woohoo! Night!” Moon shouted from the side. A few of the other guards were cheering as well.

“About time you beat her into the ground!” Swirl walked up to me laughing. “Seeing you get hit with a stick was almost getting old!” He stopped to think for a moment. “Never mind. That will never get old.” He walked off into the castle cackling like a mad man.

“Come on. Drinks on me.” Silver announced

Silver led me, Black, Moon, And Lotus to the bar. We all sat at the main bar and ordered hard ciders. To be honest I had never drank a lot of alcohol, so the strong smelling drink made me slightly nervous. “Come on! It won’t Bite!” Black stated before taking a large gulp of his drink. His slammed his mug down and belched. “Not much anyways.”

“You look like your scared of a little alcohol. Could the mighty Nightwing really be worried over such a thing?” Lotus asked me smugly. I just gave her a blank stare.

“Oh lighten up Night! We’re just teasing!” Moon said before taking a swig of drink. “Not like anything could go wrong.” I looked nervously at my drink before levitating it to my beak.

“Did you seriously just say that Moon?” Black asked. “Now I’m worried something **will** happen.” He laughed. I just looked at them all before giving up. *Whats the wors- Nope! Not finishing that sentence! Never!* I promptly threw the mug back and downed it all in one go.

WHYYYYYYYYY!?!? I screamed in my head as I woke up in my bed. The sun was so bright! *Aaaarg!! DIIIIIIIE!!!* I shrieked internally at the sun.

Author's Notes:

Yay for infinite chapters!!!! Also, in the next chapter i will explain stuff that happened over the three month period. I mainly did a little time skip because i didn't want to go through the whole training thing. Also, please note that Night is NOT A MASTER AT BEING A GUARD NOW. Hes just better at it. He has a long way to go before he becomes super good. He's more, slightly above average.

Tensions Arise

Over the past three months a lot had happened. More ponies had filtered into the now small city. More houses were built, and large farms had sprung up around the outside of the walls. The forest made that slightly difficult, but the ponies managed to clear what land they needed. I looked down upon all of this as I soared through the air.

I was flying towards Celestia's balcony in a hurry. She and Swirl said they need me and a few other guards for something important. Lotus and Black were meeting in the main hall where two other solar guards were meeting as well. But they requested that I meet them in a more private setting. *What has happened now?* I couldn't help but wonder.

I kicked up a few leaves as I landed on Celestia's huge balcony. "Caw!" I called out as I tapped on the window.

"Yes yes. Come in Night." Swirl called from inside. I pushed open the glass doors and strode into the room. "About time you showed up!" Swirl had a small frown on his face. Celestia's room was pretty....pretty I guess. White marble floor, with white stone walls. Gold accents on everything. And it half the size of a house. *How much space could you possibly need?*

"Hello brother!" Celestia greeted me. Ah yes, that happened over the months as well. Me and the sisters had grown closer together, to the point of me gaining 'brother status'. I couldn't help but smile a little at her greeting.

"Chirp!" I greeted back and hugged her with a wing.

"Focus you two. We have important business to deal with." Swirl interrupted. "Fine, what's wrong?" I wrote on some paper. Starswirl sighed before answering. "It seems that another small nation of ponies farther south is.....unhappy with our taking over this land." An irritated look grew on his face. "This isn't even their land! They said they were going to 'claim it in the future'."

“A few strange Pegasi flew over our town the other day. They circled a few times then flew off in the direction of the other city. It seems they were scouting us. The next morning a letter arrived with an armored guard. It stated that we had invaded land they wished to claim in the future, and we were to vacate immediately.” Her eyes narrowed for a second. “Or there would be consequences...” The words hung in the air for several seconds. *A rival nation threatened us?* My eyes widened for a second. *Ooooo boy.*

“What is the plan?” I asked. Starswirl answered, “The plan is for you and a small group of guards, you already know who, to deliver a letter to the city. This letter will state our intentions to stay on this land, and our hope that we can coexist peacefully.” He grumbled. “Even if they are irritating as hay.” Celestia gave a small smile at Starswirl.

“There **is** another objective as well. We wish to see how these ponies will react to two new races.” Celestia explained. “You must use the utmost caution Night. You may not be received well.” Celestia released a long slow breath. “Please be safe out there. We couldn’t bear to lose you.” Celestia gave me a hug.

“Darn bird.” Swirl grumbled as he gave me a pat on the back. *Oh, you know you love me Swirly.* I snickered at him. “Now begone with you! The others have already been instructed as to these events. They are most likely waiting for you by the gates.” Swirl shooed me out the door and off the balcony.

“Hur hur hur!” I laughed as I flew away. I flew swiftly over the town, ponies looking up as the strange shadow passed. A few of them smiled but most just looked slightly nervous. *Better than when I first showed up in public.* I could see a small group of guards by the front gate. They were leaning against the wall talking to each other.

The solar guards had quickly accepted the Thestrals over the three months. In fact, the Lunar guards had started to get as full as the solar. And not just with Thestrals. Regular ponies had started to join regularly, seeming to have gotten over their fear of the Batponies.

The two solar guards by the gate were field officers judging by the

mark on their armor's shoulders . They were right above infantry but below officer. Infantry was the lowest rank in the guard. Everyone started out as infantry and worked their way up the ranks, except for a few exceptions. Then came field officers. These were the soldiers that commanded from the field. They typically relayed orders from the Officers. The Officers commanded multiple field officers, and above them were the Captains. There were only ever four Captains. One for the solar guard, one for the lunar guard. One for the solar **personal** guard, and one for the Lunar personal guard. Captain was the highest rank possible and they commanded the officers and everyone below them. Thus when I landed, the two field commanders jumped up and saluted.

"Chirp." I said at them. They looked at each other and held their salute. *Oh boy. This is going to be interesting.* 'At ease.' I made appear on my wing. I had learned how to do it during training, writing on my wings, but I constantly forgot I could do it. I had gotten used to writing on scrolls. The two soldiers relaxed and dropped their forelegs to the ground.

"Greetings Captain Night!" The left soldier greeted. He was unicorn that had a mane with two bright shades of blue and a white coat. *Oh boy, I wonder who's ancestor you are.* I smiled. He had, surprise, a red shield for a cutie mark. "My name is Field Officer Gleaming Shield." Gleaming pointed to his right. "This is Field Officer Armor Breaker." Armor Breaker was another unicorn. He had a slightly longer horn than normal and his mane was a dull red. His coat was a light gray to complement the dull red.

"It's nice to meet you Captain." Armor said in a very serious tone. In fact he looked like a very serious pony. The way he stood and talked made it seem like he was all business. "We have already been briefed on the situation. We are ready to leave whenever you are."

"Yep!" Lotus exclaimed. "Got all our supplies already packed." She motioned to the saddle bags they all were wearing. *Shoot! I knew I forgot something!* I didn't bring anything with me. "And don't worry, I already grabbed your stuff for you." She smirked and threw a bag to me. It had was designed to slip onto my back between my wings. It had my breastplate and wing blades clipped onto the side of it.

“Chirp!” “Thank you.” I wrote across my wing as I slipped on the wing blades and breastplate. The breastplate was made of the same material as my wings, so it could also be used for a bigger scrying surface than my wing blades. I looked through the bag to find two blankets, two canteens, a stack of paper, an inkwell, and a small wooden box with several quills in it. I slipped the letter from Starswirl out from under my wing and put it in the bag. “Ok then, shall we head out?” I asked.

“Ready when you are.” Black responded.

One Week Later Starswirl

I walked through the hall of the new magic school. The massive stone building sat right beside the castle. Its silver capped roofs and marble floors shown with a newness that almost hurt to look at. For the first time in a while I had been smiling all day. My ripe age of 137 had left me grumpy usually. But today was different. I had spent all morning instructing young ones in the art of magic. It was exciting enough to make my heart race! My bones may be old, but my mind was as sharp as ever. The looks on the young unicorns faces filled me with joy as they learned things they never knew about. New ways to use magic. New to them anyways.

I walked down the hall slowly, my shoulder had been hurting the last hour and I had been tired the past couple of days. As I approached my office door my chest started hurting. I gasped as I reached for the handle. *Whats wrong with me?* I pushed open the door and stumbled toward my desk. I fell flat on my face before I made it halfway. My vision was fading as I drifted to sleep, and I tried to channel a light spell to my horn. Anything to let someone know I needed help! However, as I channeled the energy to my horn.....my vision finally faded.

Third Person

The energy building up inside Starswirl horn didn't stop when he passed out. In fact it grew and grew until his horn could hold no

more mana. Then it released in a large beam that burst through the roof and into the sky. The sisters could see the beam clearly from their castle. Upon noticing the color, they knew something terrible had happened.

Nightwing

We had finally reached the city after a week. It took a week because our map was sideways for the first two days. Gleaming got a smack on the head for that. But after trekking through the Everfree and vast plains we were here, and I had to say, the city was impressive. It had high walls all the way around with only two entrances. The buildings were higher towards the center and lower around the edges so you could see all the way to the middle of the city. The walls were of dark stone, and the gates were framed in iron. It wasn't as pretty as the Everfree castle, but it rivaled it in size. It had probably a thousand homes in its walls. The walls had guards constantly patrolling and watching everything in sight.

We observed all of this from inside the tree line. We were trying to decide the best way to go about this. 'Lotus, Breaking.' I got there attention. 'You stay here as backup, me, Black, and Gleaming will deliver the message. I'll signal if anything goes wrong.' Silver had given me tips on basic common sense when in a dangerous situation.

"What's the signal?" Gleaming asked me.

'They'll know, trust me.' I promptly stepped out of the trees with Gleaming and Black follow me. Gleaming specialized in shield spells apparently, so he would be good to have if anything went south. And Black was a Thestral. And our mission was to introduce Thestrals and myself to the ponies.

We were spotted the second we stepped out. The gate facing us opened up and at least twenty guards ran out in full armor. I was almost ready to fight until they slowed down in front of us. They were all wearing iron armor and bore iron swords at there sides. They all glared at me and Black. One of the soldier carefully approached Gleaming.

“What is your business here?” He demanded.

“We come from the kingdom to your north, in the Everfree. We bear news from the Princesses!” Gleaming explained. The soldier perked up at that.

“Yes yes! We’ve been expecting you. Leave your.....bizarre pets outside and come in.” *Ouch. My feelings.* I glared at the soldier for a moment.

“I’m afraid I can’t do that sir. These **pets** as you call them are my superior officers. Unless they are allowed to enter then none of us will.” Gleaming defended us, bringing a smile to my face.

“HAHAHA!!!” The soldier laughed, along with some of the nearby guards. “These vile creatures are surely nothing more than beast!” He straightened up and continued. “Now come inside. Our leader is expecting you.” At that, Black had had enough of the foolishness.

“We would be glad to come in. Thank you for offering.” Black stated. All the guards gasped as he spoke. The soldier speaking to Gleaming gasped for a moment before putting on a strained smile. He was also sweating quite a bit.

“A-ah. I’m am So sorry. I have simply never seen another of your kind.” He tried to explain. “You must be the commanding officer!” He smiled in a hopeful way. *You aren’t getting out of this that easy.* I almost laughed in my head. Almost. I loved the Thestrals, so seeing someone insult them was mildly irritating.

“Nnnnope.” Said Black with a smirk. “This is our commanding officer.” He pointed at me and I glared down at him.

“H-hello?” The now terrified guard said to me. His eyes lifting up to meet mine.

“Caw!” The guards all flinched at that. ‘It is a.....**pleasure** to meet you.’ The words scrawled across my wing. The soldier gaped at me before his eyes rolled up and he fell over.

My talons clicked on the floor as I sat on a cushion in the main

dining hall. The tension was thick enough to cut with a knife. The leader, named Over Time, sat on the other end of the table from me. To my right and left sat Black and Gleaming. On Over's right and left sat two guards. "S-s-so!" Over stuttered. "My apologies for my guards actions!" He attempted to apologize. Every time I clicked my talon on the stone like a raptor, he flinched. "So! You are here to discuss your surrender of our land yes?" Gleaming choked on his water at my left. Black had an unamused face on as he wiped spit and water from his face. I just looked across the table at Over. I levitated the letter out and slid it down the table to him.

'Read that. Then we'll talk.' I wrote across my breastplate. Yay for magic metal. He gulped as he took the letter and opened it. His expression changed wildly as he read from the letter. From hope to anger then finally to a blank expression as he set the letter down. He tapped the table twice and the unicorn guard on his left burnt the letter in a ball of fire.

"Unfortunately these terms are not agreeable. I will have to ask that you and your beast leave. Now." He pointed towards the door in a angry manner. I quickly stood then spun around towards the door. I heard Black and Gleaming stand up next to me and begin to follow. We walked across the stone floor in a hurried manner, eager to leave.

Only seconds from the door a pink colored shield sprung up around us, and a faint CLINK was heard. I spun around to see an angry Gleaming drop the shield as the knife fell to the floor. Over had the look of being caught red handed on his face. You know, the look that says 'oh crap! They saw me!' The guards beside him jumped up in order to defend him, but I just spun around and left through the door way. Gleaming and Black followed me.

I wasn't worried about getting killed. I couldn't die now, so that was the least of my concerns. I was however worried about what the kingdom we just left would do in retaliation. The kingdom called Overia. Yeah, that was the name. They had an egotistical hothead for a leader. There was no chance this would just die off. So I took out my irritation on a pack of timberwolves we stumbled across.

“KEEEEEAR!!” I screeched as I quickly dispatched the four wooden wolves.

“Ok, hand it over Gleaming.” Lotus smirked as Gleaming dropped a small bag of bits in her hoof. “Told you he would take them out in under ten seconds.” Gleaming just let out a groan.

“That was all my spending money to....” Gleaming looked at the ground.

“Never make bets with Lotus. Or anyone for that matter.” Laughed Black. “You’ll lose far too much money.” Breaker just stood on the edge of the clearing looking serious. Simply observing his surroundings.

I stood in the middle of the clearing and took deep breaths. After I had calmed down I stood back up and sighed. ‘I’m sorry about that. Between that pony insulting you and throwing a knife at me.....I lost my temper a bit.’

“Lost your temper?!” Lotus fell to the ground laughing.

“What she means to say.” Black glared at Lotus. “Is that you showed surprising control of your temper. Another pony would have attempted to kill him then and there. Yet you walked away.” He smiled at me. “That seems like a pretty good temper to me. One a respectable commander would have.” Gleaming walked up to me.

“I agree! I was about to take out his guards when you walked through the door!” He shyly rubbed the back of his head. “I suppose I didn’t think about the consequences.” I looked over at Breaking to see what he thought. He just stood there. *oooookay then.*

Lotus had managed to stop laughing and stood up from her position on the ground. “Oh yeah! A younger Silver would have cut his head off!” She fell down laughing again. I honestly didn’t see what was so funny. She took a minute to calm down before she stood up again. “Okay! Okay. I think I’m done.” She breathed heavily.

“Come on, we have to get back home and tell Princess Celestia about this development.” Black stated before he started walking in

the direction of the castle.

“Can’t wait to get back and buy some cider with all these bits!” Lotus bragged to Gleaming. I shivered at the thought of more alcohol. *Never. Again.*

“Okay we get it Lotus. Leave the poor kid alone.” Black defended Gleaming Shield. “Don’t feel bad Gleaming. I’ve lost more than once to her.” He hung his head. “Took me far to long to learn no-“ Black was interrupted as a letter appeared in front of me in a burst of yellow magic. I snatched it out of the air and ripped it open. My eyes widened as I read what it said.

Third Person

Nightwing’s eyes widened as he read the letter. Then, in a flash of blue and black light, he vanished. “So uh, do we just wait here or....” Gleaming asked. Black went over to pick up the fallen letter. Upon reading it his eyes closed for a moment.

“Come on. It’s time to head home. Starswirl has fallen ill.”

Author's Notes:

I live on comments by the way. The more comments I get, the more I want to write. And please believe me when I say, I read every. Single. Comment. I really do. I love comments! Also, 3000 words!!! Woohoo. So how was it?

War Drums

Nightwing

I laid beside Luna as I attempted to calm her sobbing. Luna's room was the opposite of Celestia's in all but size. Black floors and dark blue walls. Silver and Black stood outside the door to make sure no one disturbed us. "Coooooo." I cooed to Luna. I nuzzled her with my head. Slowly she quieted down and drifted into sleep.

She had been crying ever since we took her away from Starswirl. The doctors needed to focus and they couldn't with Luna crying in the room. Me and Celestia had to practically drag her from the room. The doctors predicted Swirl would live, but he would be weak for a long time. Even his magic would be effected due to his surge when he fell unconscious. His magical power would be reduced by one quarter for the rest of his life due to the damage in his horn.

I left Luna's night themed room in a bad mood. I nodded to Silver and Black as I made my way to the main hall. The nobles has gotten word of the nation to the south, and that combined with Starswirl's sudden fall to illness....the nobles had demanded an audience with Celestia. Fortunately for me the main doors were closed when I enter from a side entrance. Celestia was slumped down on her golden throne.

"Chirp!" I got her attention. She perked up as she looked tiredly at me.

"Oh. Hello brother. Forgive me for not getting up to greet you. I seem to be quite tir....." Celestia stopped talking as she drifted into sleep. Her head slowly lowered until it was right above the arm of her throne. Then it suddenly dropped making an audible THUNK as her head hit the metal. "I'M UP STARSWIRL!!!" She yelled before looking around and realizing where she was. She looked down and sighed. "Even in our dreams his state plagues us." She levitated a letter up to me. "Here, read this. I can't bear to read it again." I took the letter and unfolded it in front of me, the wax seal already

broken.

The writing was flowery and almost unreadable to my untrained eyes.

‘From

his majesty Over Time.

I am sorry you could not accept my fair offer. You have forced my hoof in the matter. My forces shall be there in a fortnight. I hope you will have reconsidered by that point.’

I crushed the letter in my talon as it burst into cold blue flames. I slammed the ashes into the marble floor as I looked up at Celestia. “What am I to do Night? We cannot compete against him. His forces are greater and more extensively trained.” She seemed to sink further into her cushion. “I couldn’t bear to move our home now. Not after we have just settled. And with Starswirl as he is....” She stopped and started to cry softly. Suddenly she jumped up and ran to me. He threw her hooves around my neck and cried into my shoulder. All the while I was forming a plan. My eyes narrowed as a small smile came to my face. I pushed Celestia back for a second. ‘I’ll be back shortly. I may have an idea to help with this situation.’ I spun around and raced over the marble floor and out the main doors. I pushed through the ponies on the other side, much to their irritation.

I swiftly took to the skies once I was out side. Over the city I flew, looking down on the oil lamps lighting the streets. Most of the windows were dark. But the building I was targeting had the windows lit with an eternal light. The forge is where I was headed. I landed outside the door and stirred up the dust and leaves on the road. Heavy Set had changed much from his grumpy self in Brightshine. He had gotten much happier since his promotion to royal blacksmith. I knocked on the door in a hurried fashion. “Yes?” He opened the door to see who had interrupted his late night forging. “Nightwing! So nice of you to visit!” His eyes widened and he smiled at me. “I can’t tell yah how much everything yah’ve done for me means!” He practically dragged me into the building. “I’ve been getting yer shipments of feathers by the way! I’ve put them to good use too!” Every time I lost feathers during preening I put them in a box. At the end of the month I sent the box to Heavy.

“Here! Try these!” He handed me two sharp pieces of blue steel. That’s what we had named the metal made of my feathers. It’s basic ability was the opposite of red steel, which was made with Phoenix feathers. Blue steel froze things, and red steel burned things. The only other difference so far was that blue steel could scry things. ‘Are these....rooster fighting blades?’ I held up the very similar looking blades. My friend had showed me pictures of the wicked looking knives one time. The only difference was that they covered the whole foot except my talons. The covering was some kind of blackened leather, which matched my black talons. I slipped them onto my feet one at a time. “Oh! Lift up your back claw!” Heavy looked excited. My black claw fit threw a hole in the leather beside the blade. I lifted it up and with a SHINK the blade retracted into the lower half, leaving a unassuming piece of metal on the glove. I lifted my talon again and the blade slid back out. *Well this is going to be useful.*

‘Thank you Heavy!’ I happily printed on my wings. I looked around to make sure the building was empty. ‘I have a special request.’ Heavy perked up even more at hearing this.

“Oh? And what be the request?” He looked at me curiously.

‘Have you ever heard of a catapult. Or a ballista?’ I asked hopefully. I only knew the basics of how they worked, so I hoped he would know how to make them. Heavy rubbed his chin with a hoof.

“I can’t say I have. What are they?” Heavy stared at me with joy at the possibility of learning something new.

‘They are large machines built for war. Made for launching stones and giant spears.’ I paused and looked around again. I didn’t want word about the attack getting out yet. ‘There is going to be an attack on the city. No one knows about it except me and Celestia.’ Heavy put in a serious face.

“From that city in the south eh? I knew they didn’t respond well, but an attack?” His face turned angry. “This place is the best thing that’s happened to me. I won’t lose it. What’s the plan?” I pulled several sheets of paper from a table top and pulled out a loose feather. *Finally. That ones been bothering me.* “Sorry, But I’m outa

ink.” Heavy said as I looked around. *Out of ink huh? I don’t have time for this!* I concentrated on the feather in my telekinesis and the tip lit up with black magic. *Maybe this will work.* I put the feather to the paper and drew a basic picture of a ballista with a spear in it. The marks left by the feather sparkled slightly, making the lines of the picture look like they had glitter on them.

“This is amazing!” Heavy exclaimed when he saw the picture. “Where did you come up with this!?” He looked at me in excitement.

“That is a long story my friend. Can you build it?”

“Of course I can build it! I may need a few helpers though....” Heavy looked thoughtful for a moment. “AHA! I’ve got it! I’ll get Silver anvil, you remember him, and a few construction ponies. Me and Silver will make the metal bits, and the others can slap um together!” Heavy looked as if he were about to start prancing around.

‘Wonderful! We need several of these. I also have some ideas about specialty arrows for them....’ I drew up another design of an arrow that, once launched, would unfold on the sides and make long poles sticking out. These would spin through the air and down any Pegasi.

“Night, if you were a mare and not a bird I would kiss you.” Heavy looked at me. “I wil start construction immediately!”

‘Wait! One more thing.’ I drew up one last picture. This one of a catapult. ‘These launch large boulders. You can even light said boulders in fire. Or replace the big boulder with many smaller ones.’ I stopped to think for a moment. ‘When they are constructed I want some catapults and ballistas hidden in the woods. I want some in the castle as well. Hopefully these will make it an easy battle.’ I turned around to leave. I had several things to do in preparation. ‘It was good to see you Heavy! I’ll be back again! Busy night tonight.’ I walked out the door and took off into the night sky, blending in perfectly.

I raced just under the clouds to the other side of the castle. I banked

right and circled down till I was level with a balcony. I flew towards the lit up doors and landed on the stone deck. TAP TAP! I knocked on the windows quickly with my beak. The pony in the office jumped in his chair when he heard me. “Goodness, you surprised me Night!” He said as he opened the doors. I stepped into the room and looked around. It was the first time I had been in the solar Captain’s office. *I probably need to look at my office. I probably have lots of papers to read.* His office had plain stone floors and walls. He had a few bookshelves scattered around the edges, and a mirror across from his desk. “What do you need at this late hour my feathered friend?” Light Lance asked as he went back to his desk.

‘Late? Maybe for you.’ I wrote as I walked over. ‘We have an issue. Overia is moving against us in a fortnight.’

“What!? Why!? Because we didn’t give them our land!?” Light stood up and started pacing. “We can’t win this! My scouts have seen their forces, they have almost two men for every one of ours!” Light was pacing furiously now and muttering to him self.

“Caw!” I grabbed his attention. ‘I have that handled, I just need you to accelerate the training of the current recruits by as much as possible. They will help to even the odds.’ I looked directly into his eyes. ‘We can win this. I have an ace in our sleeve.’ I reassured him. ‘Just make sure the guards are ready. I bid you goodnight.’ I walked back out to the balcony and jumped off, only opening my wings when I reached the second story of the castle. I used the extra speed to rocket across the courtyard in the center of the castle. I lifted up and flew up the side of the tower to my balcony. I entered into my room quickly and shut the door behind me. I drew the curtains and walked to the mirror I had hanging on the wall. My room was more night themed than most of the castle. It was closer to Luna’s. Black marble floors with silver flecks in them. My bed was a large circle resting against the wall. The stuffing was literally made of clouds, and the comforter was made of blue velvet. I had an empty walk in closet on the side that I used to store my blades and breastplate. I hadn’t gotten any clothes yet, I had no need. Beside the balcony doors I had a writing desk. And in front of me sat a project I had been working on. I had the frame of a mirror, and in the frame seemed to be a window into space.

I had gotten the royal seamstress to place the feathers in such a way that they looked like one solid piece. She was always trying to make me clothes, but I had managed to settle her down with this project. The oval frame was made of silver with onyx inlaid into it in a spiral. I reached up and touched the feathers in the middle and focused on what I wanted to see. This mirror would give me a bigger viewing surface than my wings.

The center of the scrying mirror swirled for a minute before it stopped on a black image. Nothing but black. I frowned at it for a second. *Did it not work?* The mirror flashed once before showing a circular room with several ponies in it. And in the middle on the mirror was Over Time. His brown coat and black mane caused me to clench my beak for a second.

“Uh, sir.” One of the unicorns spoke up while looking at the wall.

“What now!?” Over yelled at him.

“I-I saw the anti scrying runes flicker. It was probably nothing, they’ve stabilized.”

“Good! Now no more false alarms!” Over rubbed his temples as he sighed. “Now! Here’s the plan.” He started explaining the plan to, what I assumed, were his generals. I zoomed in on the map he had on the table. “We will approach from the south and the east, the forest is thinner on that side than the west. Once we have breached the outer wall you will command your men to set fire to all buildings on the way to the castle. When we arrive at the castle we will break open the doors and slaughter their so called **Princesses.**” Over looked around with a glare. “Is everything clear?” The other ponies nodded. “Excellent! Meeting adjourned. Prepare the forces, we move in one week!” They all filed from the room in an orderly fashion. I stopped concentrating and the mirror faded back to a starry background. I contemplated what I had heard as an asteroid flew past the mirror, leaving a dusty trail behind itself.

So. They plan to attack a week earlier than they said. A surprise attack. I’m glad I told Light to speed up the training. We will need all the soldiers we can get. I stood up and walked over to the writing desk. I pulled over a few sheets of paper and began to write several letters.

Forgoing the ink pot, I levitated the feather I had used at Heavy's shop and relit the tip with black fire. *This looks so cool.* I thought before I began to write.

'It seems the enemy is planning to strike a week early. Any efforts you can make to speed up progress would be very much appreciated. Be ready. In one weeks time we battle.

From Captain of the Lunar Personal Guards, Nightwing.'

I copied the letter again and sent one to both Light Lance and Heavy Set. *I hope we can win this. I don't know what we'll do if we lose.* One thing was for sure. I wasn't letting my sisters get slaughtered. My eyes glared into the mirror. *You better be ready Over. Nothing is going to stop me from reaching you.*

Author's Notes:

Yay! Another long chapter! So how was it?

War Flames

One Week Later

I circled over the castle with two Pegasi in light iron armor. I had on my wing and claw blades, as well as my breastplate. We were watching from high above as we waited for the enemy to appear. The castle had been fortified and the citizens placed in the main castle. Three ballistas sat on watchtowers facing the south and west, and two catapults sat behind the walls. Two more ballistas were in the woods along side another three catapults. Each ballista had a mixture of arrows available to them.

Maple spears were the spears that unfolded and extended arms out to their sides. They resembled maple seeds as they twirled through the air. Then they had basic spears and the Hot Tip spears. Heavy had developed these with some unicorns. The arrows were tipped with gems, which were apparently very common in equestria. The gems were covered in runes that registered hard impacts to them, so when the gem tip hit the ground, or a pony, the sensing runes would activate the second set of runes. These runes were designed to release the over pressured magic in the crystals in large fiery explosions.

The catapults also had multiple types of ammunition. They had your basic boulders, then they had smooth stone pellets coated in oil, would be lit on fire before being launched. Hopefully the catapults would set wide areas on fire. We had Pegasi waiting to put out the fires outside the wall after the battle.

Light had finished the new guards' training just the day before. *Just in time too.* Heavy and Silver had not only made the ballistas and catapults, they had also forged iron armor and weapons for all the new guards. All of the guards now had full armor and weapons. Me and the rest of my guards, Silver, Black, Lotus, And Moon, had all gotten blue steel weapons and armor, which was incredibly light and strong. Unfortunately we didn't have the supplies to make enough for everyone. Unless I wanted to be featherless for a year.

We circled once more around the castle. The guards on watch had yet to raise the alarm. Everyone was anxiously waiting for the enemy to appear. The forest was dead quiet.

UUUUUUUUUURRRRRR!! A horn sounded from the westernmost tower. “KEEEAAAARRR!!” I shrieked as me and my entourage turned to fly in that direction. Already I could see enemy units in the distant trees.

“FIRE CATAPULTS!! FIRE PELLETS!!” Field officers across the wall yelled out in unison. With a loud FWOOSH, what looked like a cloud of fire flew out of the trees. The enemy units stopped and gaped for a moment before they charged the wall. “FIRE BALLISTAS!! HOT TIPS!!” With a sharp TWANG! several spots in the enemy units erupted in fire balls. Just in time for the first wave of pellets to hit. The hot tips took out large chunks of the enemy, but the pellets didn’t harm the soldiers themselves. No, the pellets lit the forest ablaze and caused the soldiers to panic. Flaming trees fell across the charging soldiers. They were halfway to the wall now, and you could practically see their fear.

Then, from behind a wall of clouds, a swarm of metal covered figures appeared. The enemy Pegasi had arrived. “FIRE THE MAPLES!!!” Another TWANG echoed through the woods. Large spears flew up through the air. The Pegasi simply adjusted their course slightly. After all, how could a simple spear do any damage to them all the way up there? Those thinking that quickly died as I watched the spears unfold just before they hit the flying soldiers. The spinning poles took out huge groups of the pegasi, and in just one volley their forces were cut in half.

Broken metal forms fell around us as we flew over the enemy army. I had one specific target. The unicorn Over Time. I could see the fear in the soldiers below us. They had never faced such opposition. Yet they courageously marched on. They had almost reached the wall. *Therrrrrrre!* I hissed in my head as I located Over behind his soldiers. He had a shield over himself as he followed a safe distance behind his army. *Your time has come.* “KEEEAAAARR!!” I started to lower down with my stone faced guards following closely.

I didn’t lower all they way to the ground, instead I let the heads of

the soldiers below slow me down as they hit my wing blades. Some of them bounced off as their helmets protected them. Others had grown a little too tall.... As I finally settled down on the ground I released my claw blades. The soldier beside me didn't live more than ten seconds after I landed. The one behind him received a knife to the chest.

I flipped over the dead pony in front of me and pierced my claw blades through the armor of the pony behind him. As he fell dead I threw out a wing and decapitated the soldier charging me from the side. Then I jumped up in time to avoid the blow from behind. I picked up the pony as he landed in the dirt under me. "Aaaah!!" He screamed as my claws dug into his flesh, spreading dark frostbite along his back. "PLEEEASE!!" He called out as I lifted him up. I flew over his leader and threw him down at the shield. "NO! NO NO NOOOO-" His screaming was cut short as he impacted the shield. *Not even a crack.* I had to admit, Over wasn't a wimp with magic. But I could do better.

I left my entourage to take care of the soldiers behind us as I approached Over. He shot a bolt of magic through his shield. I simply side stepped it. His cocky smile made me angrier. *Slaughter their so called princesses...* His words ran through my mind as I got closer. He shot another bolt of magic. Once again I stepped around it. *Slaughter their princesses...* My feathers started to glow as they darkened. The ground around me turned cold and frost formed on it as I walked closer. Now his eyes were starting to get worried. I was right outside his shield now. He fired another bolt of magic. I didn't even dodge it, it simply dispersed over my feathers before disappearing. Now the fear shone clear in his eyes. *Slaughter....* As I reached his shield I reached out a wing to touch it. I looked over it before looking directly into his terrified eyes. Then I pushed.

Slowly my wing slipped through the shield. Followed by my foot, then my leg. After a few seconds my whole body was on the inside of his shield. "Wha-what **are** you!?" He shivered as I reached up a talon to his neck. "AAACK!" He choked as I lifted him off the ground. *I won't lose this family....* I bit onto his horn and clenched my beak as hard as I could. "AAAAA-" His shrieking stopped as his life was ended by my claw. I dropped him on the ground and turned

to face my stunned guards.

‘Finish them off! Let any who run get away, we don’t need to kill them all.’ I marched past them toward the wall. Any soldiers who approached me met a swift end. Just as I was about to kill a soldier in my claw, I stopped. I turned to look into the woods as I threw the pony down. He ran away crying as I peered deep into the trees. *THERE!!* A bolt of emerald green magic flew from the woods and hit an enemy soldier. Another two followed it and finished the soldier off. As I focused on the origin of the light I could see three black figures. Suddenly a pair of bright blue eyes met mine. Then, they were gone.

I blinked and stared at the spot for a long minute. Then I shook my head and turned back to the battle. *Later.* I told myself. There weren’t many ponies left attacking the castle. They hadn’t even breached the wall. I saw a few running, and as per my orders they were not chased. The last of the attackers fell swiftly as the guards inside the castle ran out to finish off the few that remained.

The cleanup was long and hard. The bodies cleared from the woods and buried. Friend and foe were buried, none left uncovered. As the last of the bodies was covered up I looked into the small bag I had brought with me. Inside was a single brown horn. *To remember what happened today.* I tied the bag closed and flew off to get cleaned up.

Author's Notes:

So! How was the fight scene? Good or bad? It my first large scale battle. Was it to much or to little?

Many Regrets

After I had washed the blood from my feathers, and the smell of death didn't follow me, I walked to Luna's room. I stopped to knock on the door but stopped myself. *I don't think I can be with Luna after what has happened tonight.* Luna wasn't aware of the battle. She had heard the yells and screams of course, but she didn't know what was happening. Celestia had made sure of that. So I continued walking aimlessly through the castle, looking out the large windows and into the night sky. *For a kid Luna sure is a good artist.* I watched as a few shooting stars streaked across the sky.

Eventually I ended up in the medical wing. I looked around as I realized where I was. I was directly outside of Starswirl's room. I sighed and entered to check on the still sleeping unicorn. "It is about time you showed up!" Starswirl yelled at me. I just stood in the door choking as I stared at him. "What is it now? I go to sleep for a few days and I wake up to the sounds of mana explosions and battle!" He raised an eyebrow at me. "Well? I'm waiting." I just rushed up to him and gave him a hug. "Ow! Ok ok!" I pulled back to see him smiling. "It's good to see you to Night. How are the sisters?"

'Wonderful! Have they seen you yet!?' I excitedly flashed across my feathers.

"All in due time Night. Now, explain to me what has happened." And so I did. I explained the response from Overia, and the battle resulting from it.

'I have many regrets Starswirl. I regret we weren't able to peacefully settle the matter. I regret not being here when you were hurt. And I regret how cruelly I killed Over Time.' I sighed as I sat beside his bed. I opened up the bag around my neck and dumped the horn onto the bed before Swirl. 'I kept this. To remind me of the unneeded pain I caused.' Starswirl attempted to pick the horn up in his magic, only for his horn to fizzle out and stop glowing.

"That will take getting used to." He looked up at his horn in

irritation. Then he picked up the horn I had placed on the bed.

“Hmm.” He looked at the horn then back at me. He looked back to the horn as he spun it in his hooves. “Did I ever tell you about the time I beat a bully in school?” He asked all of a sudden.

‘Um, no?’ I rubbed my head, confused. ‘What does that have to do with anything-’

“WHEN I was a young colt.” He interrupted me. “I enrolled in the magic university. Now, I was by no means a strong colt. I was thin and weak. The only thing strong about me was my magic.” He paused as he looked at the horn in front of him in deep thought. His brow furrowed as he continued. “Now, due to my scrawny nature, I was the subject of much bullying. One colt in particular loved to bully me. He would shove me into walls, steal my lunch, whatever he felt like doing. And one day I had enough.” He looked in my eyes now. “I snapped. He came up to me one day and threw me into a wall. And I shot a bolt of magic into his side.” He looked down in regret. “Now, I was never bullied again. I had earned the respect of everyone in the university.” He looked back at me with a pain in his eyes. “And I hated every minute of it. When that poor colt came back to school he was not the same. He could hardly walk. He had permanent scarring on his side. And he had never been strong with magic. He didn’t last a year in the university. When he was kicked out....I never saw him again. He ran from home, off to wherever.” His gaze hardened as he looked into my eyes. “I had ruined that colts life forever. Because I did not control my power. Sometimes, in some situations, those with power have it harder than those without. You have to keep your senses, you can not let it go to your head. And sometimes, even when you are in the right, you have to restrain yourself.” He sighed and looked back at the horn. “No one is going to fault you for what you did. In fact, some may praise you for it. But the question is, how do **you** feel about what you did? Did it bring you any real satisfaction? Did it fix what was already done? Think about it, and let the answer decide how you handle similar situations in the future.” He handed me back the horn and I slid it back into the bag.

Did I get any satisfaction from giving him a cruel death? Did it really solve any problems? *No. It ended the same as it would have had*

I just killed him quickly. “Now!” Swirl exclaimed making me look up. “Let us go get some food shall we? I am starving.” He hopped out of bed and started walking towards the door. He looked back at me when he noticed I wasn’t following. “Come on! I want to leave before the nurse gets back.” He turned back around. “Darn mare will not even let me go to the bathroom by myself.” He muttered under his breath.

I hadn’t used my bed much since I woke up from the Elements. But tonight was one of the few times I decided to use it. After Swirl had gotten some food he went back to sleep. And with nothing more for me to do, I decided I might as well sleep. The bed was amazingly soft anyways. Cloud beds for the win.

Third Person

Somewhere in a desert far away, a pony paced back and forth in a large throne room. “Are you **sure** he saw you?” They asked the smaller pony in front of them.

“Yes my queen!” The smaller one had a serious expression on their face. “What are your orders?” The queen thought for a moment.

“Prepare a small group of warriors. Staying unknown is what keeps us alive. This creature endangers us. Try and remove the memories without harming it. But if that fails.....you know what to do.”

“Yes my queen.”

Author's Notes:

I’m not sure about this chapter. Did I get too deep into the moral side of things? What do you all think? Also, chapters will most likely slow down as my vacation is over. I will try to keep a steady stream going though.

Love Bugs

Breaking Armor

I crept through the darkened halls of the castle towards my target. I had my pony disguise on and my golden armor donned. I had received the order only an hour before via the hive mind. It did have a limited range, large though it was, so we had groups of changelings acting as relay points everywhere. The orders were clear. Erase the memories of changelings from Nightwing's mind or, failing that, kill him. I regretted this happening to him, but the queen gave orders for a reason. To protect us all.

I was accompanied by two other disguised changelings as I approached the door to our target. Once we arrived outside I looked both ways down the hall. Seeing nothing, I cracked open the door and peered inside. I could see everything clearly with my night vision. I looked over to the large bed and saw Night's sleeping form. His chest slowly rose and fell under the covers. I motioned for my brethren to follow me inside as I skittered into the room. We all walked slowly up to the bed and took positions around Nightwing's head.

Looking at the others I nodded and we all lit our horns. After a few seconds small strings of light came off our horns and made their way to the bird's head. Once they connected to his forehead he jerked for a second before calming down. Then everything went wrong.

Nightwing

I slowly opened my eyes to the strangest feeling. A tickling on my forehead. As I opened my eyes enough to see around me they shot open the rest of the way. *Changelings!* Now, I didn't have much knowledge on changelings other than that they were evil in the show. And admittedly adorable. So my first reaction was to lash out.

My left wing shot out and threw the two on my left into the wall, knocking them out. The one on my right jumped back and charged up his horn for something. I didn't know what but I knew it probably wasn't good. I launched across the room and tackled him to the ground before head butting him to sleep. *Never a dull moment.*

Third Person

Far away, a certain queen frowned as she felt three of her children go unconscious.

Nightwing

I dragged three limp lumps down the hall in a bag. I nodded at the very concerned guards I passed on the way to the small dungeon we had. *Down the stairs and down the hall, come on bugs! Let's have a ball!* I rhyme inside my head for no reason. *You three are heavy!* I nodded once more at a random guard. He had a **very** concerned look on his face.

"U-um. Do you need hel-" He stopped as the bag twitched violently. "Did....Did it just move?"

'No.' I looked directly at him. 'Please fetch Starswirl and Celestia. Let Luna sleep if she is sleeping. And tell her guards to keep a sharp eye out for anything suspicious.' I continued walking as he hurried off to do as I commanded. I finally reached the door leading under the castle. *Sorry guys, gunna get bumpy.* I apologized as I started heading down the stairs. I could have used magic to lift them, but you know what? They were doing something to me in my sleep. So they may have deserved to get a little roughed up. *Besides, they have natural armor. They'll be fine.*

Once at the bottom of the steps it was just a short trip to the first cell. They were all empty so far. I dragged the bag in and walked out, shutting the door behind me. *I'll get the key later.* I had left them in my office. Why carry a key ring to bed? Apparently in case you have to arrest people in the middle of the night. *The **one** time I decide to sleep.* I grumbled slightly. The captives stirred inside the

prison cell as they awoke.

A panting Starswirl and Celestia raced down the stairs and through the door. "NIGHT! What's wrong!? What happened-WHAT HAPPENED TO THAT PONY!?" Celestia screamed as a changeling stepped from the bag. As amusing as her reaction was I had to stop her from opening the door to help the 'wounded pony'.

'They're fine Celestia. They are changelings, they just look like that.' A wave of fire covered the changeling as he saw us. Breaking Armor appeared when the flames disappeared. 'Or that.' I sighed. 'They're shapeshifters.'

"Fascinating!" Swirly exclaimed as he pressed up against the bars. "Can you talk?" He asked the changeling. The changeling simply sat down and stared into space for a few seconds. "Can they talk Night?" Swirl turned to look at me.

'Yes. Though this one seems to be acting difficult.' I walked closer to the bars.

"Difficult? I will not let a moody creature stop my studies!" Swirl announced.

"And I will not let my children be experimented on." A regal voice came from the cell. The changeling's eyes had turned green. "Now, I have your attention. My name is Queen Lytra. I am speaking through the drone you see in front of you." She paused to look around her cell. "The only reason you are being graced with my presence is because you have not murdered my subjects like so many others." She focused in on me. "And you. You have knowledge of our species now. That is why I sent these three to erase your memories or...dispose of you should that fail." Lytra jumped back as Celestia slammed into the bars. Celestia's eyes glowed and her horn had small sparks flying from it.

"What did you say?" She asked in a deadly tone. "You were going to dispose of our brother!?" The bars began to melt around her as she stepped forward. "You come into our kingdom, change your forms and infiltrate our guards, then threaten to kill our family members!?" The bars were now nothing more than puddles on the

floor. Celestia walked fully into the cell with her eyes glowing and her horn alight. "Give me one reason I shouldn't end your life now."

I ran in and jumped in front of Celestia. I spread my wings wide to block them from seeing each other. 'Hey hey hey! Calm down!' I looked her in the eyes. 'I'm still here! I'm not dead yet! Let's at least hear her out.' I had to admit that I was curious as to why she was speaking to us. 'Just back out of the...hole in the wall I guess.' The cell was now just a room on the side of the hall. All the bars had melted. Celestia stared at me for a few seconds before her eyes returned to normal.

"Very well. We shall see what this cur has to say." She stiffly walked out of the room to stand beside Starswirl. Swirl took a small step away from her. ***Never making her angry.*** I turned around to look at the body Lytra was speaking through.

'What is it you want exactly?' I looked closely at her. Him. Whatever.

"What do I want? Well you had better get a lot of paper." I simply stared at her. "Oh fine, your no fun." She looked around again. "It would be nice if we could take this somewhere more comfortable."

'I quite like it here.' I wrote.

"Fine! Have it your way. I wish to...make a treaty." At all of our confused looks she explained. "You see, I can't simply get rid of you all. Not only would that be impossible while also maintaining our secretive status, it would also remove our food source." Celestia began to heat up again.

'They eat emotions Celestia.' The room cooled down again.

"Ooh! Quite knowledgeable this one. And how, may I ask, did you come across such information." The queen looked at me curiously.

'No where you need to worry about. No one knows except for those in this room.' I answered in a reassuring way.

"Very well. I believe you. Hard to lie to us anyway. What with our ability to detect emotions.' She smirked at me.

‘Yep. So what are the terms of this alliance, or treaty.’ She seemed disappointed that I wasn’t surprised.

“Well, it’s simple really. You tell no one about us and allow us to feed off of your emotions! We won’t hurt anyone of course. That wouldn’t make sense. If we hurt you ponies, we lose food.” She told Starswirl and Celestia. “And in return we can provide assistance in any future battles you face. Your friend Night has already witnessed our battle prowess at your latest skirmish.”

‘It’s true’. I wrote on my wings. ‘I did witness them helping.’

“And you didn’t say anything!?” Swirl asked loudly.

“Your sure our ponies will not suffer from your feeding?” Celestia interrupted.

“It will be like we were never there.” The queen smirked. Celestia chewed on her lip for a minute.

“Very well. We accept. It would be nice to make some allies for a change.” She walked forward and shook hooves with the queen.

‘Wait! I have one request to make before we seal the agreement.’ I interjected.

The three changelings smiled as I wrapped them in my wings and crushed them in a hug. *I agree with Celestia on this matter. It is very nice to make allies for a change.*

Author's Notes:

So, how was the changeling chapter? Of course in the future something happens that makes the wedding get attacked. But that will be explained MUCH later. I also wrote this when I was tired and it was late in the day. So tell me how it turned out.

Time Passes

One Year And Three Months Later

The city had changed a lot in just a year and a quarter. Equestria was a actual country now, instead of just a large city. The territory of the sisters had expanded greatly. Overia had joined with us soon after their leader and army fell. The citizens almost seemed happy that Over was gone. Of course, the name had to be changed. It was now aptly named Las Pegasus due to the high number of Pegasi living there. Starswirl and the sisters couldn't figure out why I had laughed for hours at the name. Not that I could blame them. *Hah! It's still funny.* I thought as I flew over Las Pegasus. I was high in the sky, circling above Luna and her entourage.

Our territory now extended north out of the forest. All the way to what I assumed would be the future city of canterlot. And yes, the mountain was huge. I had flew to the top for fun one night, and the view was amazing. To the west and east were now ours as well. Small towns had begun to form outside the forest. Poor Celestia had been busy with paperwork, electing mayors, and establishing city lines.

Speaking of change, Luna was now a legal adult at the age of five. I remembered that horses matured faster on earth, but I never thought it would apply to magical ponies. Especially ponies that could live up to one hundred and eighty years! Swirl had a fun time telling me that. Especially when I had a coughing fit over it. Anyway, regardless of how fast ponies matured, the fact was that Luna was a desirable young mare. Which meant I had a new duty to attend to. Speaking of which.... A stallion was approaching Luna's carriage with a small smile on his face. He seemed to think he had gone unnoticed so far, but I could see the small smirk on Silver's face. *Time to start operation, protect/embarrass little sister. GO!*

I dropped from the sky at a ridiculous speed. When I was a mere twenty feet in the air I threw out my wings and started flapping to slow down. Yet even as waves of air hit the ground the stallion

didn't notice me. THUMP! I landed on the ground behind the stallion, finally getting his attention. His light blue coat started shaking as he slowly turned around. I leaned in so his forehead was pressed against mine when he completely turned his head around. His ears pressed against his head and his eyes went wide as I stared into his soul. "Chirp."

"AAAAAAAHH!" He let out a not so manly scream and bolted.

"Hur hur hur hur!" I laughed as I walked over to Luna's carriage.

"Greetings Captain Night." Luna said in a very unamused way. She had been a little grumpy with me since I started scaring off all the ponies looking to approach her. Well, not all the ponies. Just the young males.

'Lighten up Luna! You'll thank me for this years from now....maybe.' I laughed at her straight face. I even saw Black crack a smile from behind the carriage. And Lotus was trying to refrain from dying on the left side, beside me. I could almost see the tears of laughter in her eyes. *Oh wait. I can see them.*

"Night, please don't be so...overbearing. I am an adult now, and I may date somepony if I so wish." Luna let out a humph as she turned away from me. "Besides, I am not the only one 'drowning in stallions' as you put it. Tia has more approach her than I do. And you don't protect **her** from them!" She glared at me.

'Your sister can shoot laser beams from her forehead. I think she'll be ok.'

"I can too!" Luna shouted at me. I simply sighed.

'Luna, Tia is much older than you. She has more experience with this type of thing than you do, so she needs less protection than someone your age. I'm sure that some of the stallions approaching you are nice ponies. But some aren't, and some may think that they are in love with you! But have any of them actually met you?' I looked at her intently, making sure I had her attention. 'And even if they did meet you, they are young. Many of them have more hormones than stars in the sky! So they may honestly think that

they love you, when really they're just physically attracted.' Luna looked down at this. She had been feeling bad recently as all the other mares her age had colt friends.

"I suppose you are right brother. I just see everyone else my age has a mare friend or colt friend and...I suppose I feel a little left out."

'I understand. But you know what? All these young relationships? They don't last long. They may last for a few months, maybe even a year! But they rushed into their partnership. Sometimes they don't really love one another, so they split up.' I lifted her chin up with a wing. When she looked at me I smiled for her. 'All I'm saying is to give it time. You just turned five not long ago. You have plenty of time!' I looked around in a conspiratorial manner. Then I put a wing on the other side of my beak as if to block other ponies from overhearing. 'Besides, you want to know the real reason I protect you more the Celestia? You my favorite sister.' I joked with her. She knew I was joking, that I loved them the same. But she still smiled.

"Thank you Night. You always know how to make me feel better."

"We're here!" Moon shouted from the front. I looked up to see we had arrived at a rather large hotel. "I'll go in to make sure they have your reservation your majesty." Moon Beam ran into the hotel to make sure the rooms were in order. I took up her position at the front of the cart as we waited for her to return. A few moments later she came back out. "Ok! The rooms are ready!" Moon said in a chipper voice. Black and Silver moved to the left of the carriage as Lotus opened the door for Luna to step out.

"Thank you Lotus." Luna thanked as she stepped down onto the ground. I had to push back a small crowd of ponies as Black and Silver lead Luna into the Hotel. Lotus and Moon helped me make sure no ponies snuck in to pester Luna. When they got in and were ready to close the door we followed into the building. The lobby was fairly simple. Wood floors and lighter wood walls, with a small desk in the center of the back wall with a nervous mare behind it.

"Come with me please your majesty. I have the keys already." Moon lead the way to the stairs. I approached last and gave the stairs a critical eye. *Stairs. My old enemy.* I carefully walked up the stairs

behind the others. Our rooms were on the top floor, so we took three flights of stairs. Once at the top floor we walked down the hallway to door numbers three twelve and three thirteen.

‘Ok! Silver, you and Lotus take first shift. Black, you and Moon rest up for second shift.’ They nodded and checked room three thirteen before Luna entered. After making sure it was safe they allowed Luna in. Silver and Lotus took up positions guarding the door while Black and Moon went into room three twelve to rest until night fall. After I looked around the hall one more time I went down the stairs to exit the building. We were here on a scouting mission. Luna wanted to come with the scouts since she had recently reached adulthood. We were scouting a large bay to the east of Las Pegasus. I had made the suggestion to the sisters that we establish some ports for moving materials. I hoped that this would lead to the discovery of the rest of the world. I knew that griffons and dragons were somewhere. And come on! Who doesn't want to meet a dragon!? Granted, being immortal does make it less scary. But still, **dragons!**

As I exited the building I approached an inconspicuous pony standing at the the corner of two streets nearby. He appeared to be standing there reading a newspaper, but I knew better. I gave a nod to the disguised changeling as I walked past. The Shadow hive, as the Queen, Lytra, informed us was the name, had been very helpful with surveillance and scouting. I walked back to the carriage and lightly wrapped the straps around my chest to start pulling the carriage around the corner of the hotel. When I got around to the back I parked it out of the way near the back exit. Next I took to the skies to the other side of town. I had to do a patrol through the woods, some ponies said had something about a flying lion. Others said something about a giant four legged bird. Personally I hoped I was right about what it was. A griffin. If a griffin resided in the woods nearby, well, that would change a lot.

Once I landed on the edge of town four guards approached me. All were solar pegasi guards, most of the lunar guards were sleeping. “Captain! Reporting for duty!” All of the guards saluted me.

‘Are all of you prepared?’ They all nodded. Each had a small bag of supplies on them. I decided to travel light, only bringing my armor

and blades. 'Alright, let's move.' I took to the sky as they followed me to the woods near by. We glided over several times before descending in a clearing. 'Ok. Set up a small camp. Nothing big, just something for two days.' I looked over them as they started making a small camp. *We should be done in two days.* I looked up at the sky and spread my wings. *I might as well get started.* I pushed my wings down and left a cloud of dust as I took off.

I could see for miles over the flat land. Most of it was plains with a few forests scattered here and there. In the very far distance I could see the edge of what was called the Badlands. A massive desert. Queen Lytra lived far into the endless desert. I would have to visit one day, if only to see the hive. The hive in the show looked amazing! *Focus!* I yelled at myself as I flew over the forest below me. I scanned it with sharp eyes, looking for even the slightest of disturbances.

A fox here. A bluejay there. A rabbit waaay over there. *Mmmm. Rabbit.* I looked up to see the sun was in the middle of the sky. *Well, I suppose a lunch break wouldn't hurt.* I turned to the rabbit. He didn't even realize I was there as I stalked him from high above. When I was just above him I folded my wings and dropped. The wind whistled past my ears as I fell, gaining speed faster and faster. Then when I fell below the tree line I opened my wings and shot forwards at the rabbit. It didn't even know what hit it as I slammed into it's small body. The rabbit died instantly from the impact. I flew up again and looked for a river or stream. Quickly locating one I turned to land beside it.

I landed with a thud beside the river bank. I quickly bit into the delicious rabbit. *Yeeeee!* Rabbit was turning out to be my favorite food. I had tried squirrel, mole, fish, and even a few small birds. But nothing topped a rabbit. Of course I had to wonder when animals started getting smarter. So far I hadn't seen any show more intelligence than on earth. Aside from a few exceptions anyways. Like dogs. There were a few wild dogs that showed above average intelligence. I didn't think I could ever eat a dog though. Soon the rabbit was nothing but a pile of bones on the ground. I walked into the cold water and rinsed off my beach and claws.

As I was washing, something caught my attention. A SWOOSH went

behind me and I paused for a moment before continuing my washing. I pretended to not be concerned as I splashed in the water. *Whatever it is, it's trying to be sneaky. I'll play along.* I stepped out of the water and onto the bank. As gave myself a shake before walking like I was about to take off. I almost smiled as I felt the blade press against my neck.

"Move, And you die." A femal voice said from behind me. "I'm not sure what kind of strange griffin you are, but your are going to do exactly as I say."

'Of course.' I wrote on my shoulder so she could see it. I felt her grip loosen for a second before it retightened.

"Can you speak?"

'Nnnnope.' She sighed behind me.

"Wonderful. This makes it all the harder. Still, you will suffice." Several branches snapped as two more griffins descended from the sky.

"Halt! In the name of the prince!" The left one yelled. *Now this is getting interesting!* "We have come to return you to your rightful place beside his majesty! Come with us willingly or you will be punished!" Both were armed with crossbows.

The female behind me nearly choked me as her grip tightened even more. "Give me a feather, or I'll slit your throat!" She whisper yelled into my ear. I saw my soldiers in the woods. I used my wing tip to tell them to wait.

'Yes, because I can move so well right now.' She growled before discreetly reaching behind me and ripping out one of my tail feathers. *What is it with this world and yanking feathers?*

"Sorry fellas!" She slipped my feather into her wing behind my back. "You'll just have to return empty handed!" She stepped away from me and showed them her wing with my feather. "After all, the prince cant marry a hen that's already married, can he?" **Very clever.** I smiled internally at the dumbfounded looks on the two

male griffins. Suddenly the right one threw down his crossbow.

“Clipped!” He shouted. *Was that a griffin curse word?* “Half ways around the world and she’s already married!?” He took off and started flying off. “Ain’t no money worth this trouble!” He broke through the trees and disappeared. The left griffin sighed and looked back at us with a glare.

“You better watch your backs. The future king will not be happy about this.” He picked up his friend’s weapons and shot into the sky. When he disappeared the griffin behind me let me go and turned me around.

“Well! I must apologize for my holding you hostage. But it seems I must be on my way! Later!” She tried to take off and run, but a single wing motion from me had her tackled by two pegasi. They swiftly held her on the ground as the other two approached my side.

‘Bind her wings. We return to town after this.’ The two beside me rushed forward and tied her wings down with a piece of rope.

“You can’t do this! Let me go!” The griffin screeched on the ground.

“KKKKEEEEEEAAAAARR!!” She quieted down after that. The guards lifted her up and turned her to face me. ‘You have assaulted a captain of the Lunar guard. You will be detained until further notice. Resistance is futile.’

The griffin sat in her cell, tapping the stones and making a soft clicking sound. She hadn’t talked since we brought her back. Luna walked into the small jail and stepped up to the door of the cell. “Night. I see you have captured the creature the peasants were worried about. What is it?” She looked at me in curiosity.

‘**She** is a griffin.’ I laughed a little. ‘She has refused to talk since we arrested her.’

“And why did you arrest her?” Luna asked as I walked up beside her.

‘Oh you know, she held a knife to my throat and threatened to kill

me. Business as usual.'

"If anyone else said that I would be worried." Luna turned around to leave the building. "Very well. I shall leave you to question the prisoner. I must join the scouts."

'See ya later Princess.' The griffin actually reacted as I said goodbye to Luna.

"Wait!? That was a Princess!?" She started to hyperventilate. "I attacked the captain of the **Princess's** guard!? What is she gunna do to me!? What's the **Queen** gunna do to me!?" I laughed as she panicked in the cell.

'There is no queen. The princesses are the queens.' I chuckled as she just panicked more. 'Relax! If you just answer some questions I'll let you go.' She calmed down a little at that.

"You'll....let me go? Why?" She stared at me in confusion.

'It's simple really. I don't need a prisoner, you held me hostage to protect yourself, and if you killed me I would have just hunted you down later.'

"What?"

'I don't stay dead for long.' She just lowered her head into her claws and shook her head.

"Life was so simple before this. I hunted animals for meat. I sold the meat. I made money. Then that stupid prince came and decided he wanted to marry me." She looked up at the ceiling. "Why can't life stay simple?"

"Hur hur hur!" I laughed. She glared at me as I wiped a nonexistent tear from my face. 'So you get to get married to a prince? What's so bad about that?'

"What's so bad is that I'll have to go live in the castle! I'll never go hunting again, never do anything fun, have lots of kids for someone I don't even love!" She angrily punched the wall beside her. "That's what's wrong!"

‘Hmm. Well, how about this. You answer my questions and I’ll let you go. Then you can fly as far away as you want.’ She looked up at me with a small smile.

“I think I’d like that. Thanks.”

‘Ok, first question. What is your name?’

“Golden Huntress.” I wrote her name down on the paper work that was levitating in front of me.

‘How did you get here? To this land I mean.’

“I snuck onto a trade ship when I was running from the prince. When it passed close to the land I jumped off. Griffins never come here, so I thought I would be safe. Obviously not.” She leaned on the wall and sat on the floor.

‘Why do griffins never come here?’

“Because this land is unknown. We simply haven’t explored it. We prefer the high mountains, and this land has few of those. All of our cities are on mountain peaks.” She looked at me. “Don’t you come from the griffin lands?” She looked confused.

‘If provided with a ship, could you point the way to the griffin lands?’ I ignored her question.

“No way! I’m not going back!” She growled as she approached the cell door.

‘I wouldn’t make you. But if you were given a compass would you be able to point in the direction?’ I looked up from the paper.

“Of course! Any griffin worth their salt could point back home!” She stated proudly.

‘Worth their salt? Are a lot of griffin sailors?’ She laughed.

“No. But my parents were. And my grandparents. And so on.” She looked longingly up towards the sky. “I guess that’s where I got my sense of adventure from.” She frowned as she looked back to the

cell she was in.

‘Ok!’ I wrote down the last of the information. I walked over to the cell door. ‘A deal is a deal! You’re free to go.’ I unlocked the door and swung it open. ‘Oh, one more thing.’ I handed her a compass. ‘Could you point toward griffin land?’

“Griffin land? Hah! Sure thing. I didn’t think you would actually let me out.” She took the compass and pointed straight east. “Head that way and you’ll hit the coast soon enough. It’s not that long by boat, maybe a week.” She looked at me again. “And, thanks. I guess I owe you one.” With that she walked out the door. I stood there for a few minutes, thinking. *Something tells me we’ll see each other again.*

Author's Notes:

Credit for hive name goes to Gargon94. So, how was it? First griffins!!

Griffin Coast

Four Months Later

The griffin coast was on the horizon. It had been four months since we went to scout out the bay, and in that time a small town had been built. Well, maybe not small. More medium sized. It had a thousand ponies more or less, with warehouses and big docks for trade ships. Most of the docks were empty when we left. The ponies didn't have many ships, in fact the one we were on was one of two large vessels. The only other boats we had were small fishing dinghies.

Starswirl had given me a few lessons on magic before we left. After all, a guard who could fly and use magic was a pretty good guard. Of course he couldn't teach me some of the magic I could use. Like dark magic. Oooh scary! But in all honesty, dark magic wasn't bad. It **was** bad if a light creature used it, because it drove them insane, so it had a bad reputation. Especially since creatures of the light outnumbered dark creatures by....all, almost. Well, not if you counted Thestrals, but they could only do one thing with dark magic. All they can do is make the area around them dark or darker, they can't cast different dark magic spells. In fact, the only beings Swirl had seen who could safely cast dark magic were me, the sisters, and the windigos. *I wonder when the sirens show up. Or Tirek.*

I glided behind the ship, riding thermals with Moon Beam. We slowly circled around the ship as the land crawled toward us. The griffin lands were full of huge mountains. And I mean huge! *That one is almost twice as big as Canterlot mountain!* Forest filled the valleys between the mountains, their lush leaves ending at the cliffs that lead to the ocean. Water hit the cliffs and frothed as it splashed high into the air. There were very few beaches we could make landfall at, however I managed to spot a small one.

"I see a landing location!" Shouted a changeling from the crows nest. The pilot turned the wheel and the ship slowly turned so it was alongside the small beach. Once we were across from it, the

sails were lowered and the anchor was tossed into the ocean. Luna walked onto the deck from the captain quarters and, as she strode across the deck, ponies saluted her.

“How long until we can depart for land?” Luna asked as she looked at the new land. I landed next to her with a thump.

“We can be ready in just a few minutes your majesty.” A pony answered her.

“Excellent, I wish to be on land soon as possible.” Luna turned to face me. “Are you ready Night? Today we venture into the unknown.”

‘Of course I’m ready.’ I looked up into the air. “KEEEE KEEEE!” I called out to the rest of Luna’s guard. Black, Moon, Lotus, and Silver landed behind me in a line. ‘Get ready to move out. Be prepared for anything, we don’t know what’s out there.’

We had left the rocky beach not long ago. We were swallowed by the thick trees almost immediately, as the forest was extremely dense. Strange sounds filtered through the trees, low whistles and tinkling could be heard every so often. Bright flowers and berry bushes littered the ground and vines hung from many of the trees. There were surprisingly few animals though. We saw a few rabbits and squirrels, even a wild hog ran across the path. But I expected to see more with all the food in the forest. “Why are there no animals?” A thestral asked from the back.

“Most likely because the griffins eat them.” Luna looked around. “They are not herbivores like us, so the animal population is lower.” Luna explained, which made the guard shiver a little as he looked to the sky. *I didn’t even think of that! It would explain the lack of animals.*

TINKLE TINKLE! We all looked around at the loud tinkling sound. A small insect flew by and every time it’s wings flapped it let out a small tinkling sound. It looked like a butterfly, but it had six wings made of a crystal substance. “What is it?” Moon asked as she started following it towards the woods.

“KEEE!” I called out to her. ‘Stay with the group!’ Not a moment later, three tendrils shot out of the woods to grab the crystal butterfly. The butterfly gracefully moved out of the way of the tendrils. Then it gently landed on the top most tendril. Suddenly the tendril erupted with fire. SCREEEEEEEEEE!! Something in the woods screamed as the tendrils retracted, and heavy thumps could be heard as it ran off.

“I-I think I’ll stay with the group now...” Moon ran back to the line. We continued through the forest, though we were much more cautious. Many of the soldiers flinched at every breaking twig. I had to laugh when one jumped at a leaf landing on his back.

“These forest trees appear to hide many dangers.” Luna calmly looked around. “Such a hostile land, I wonder how the griffins survive so well here.” A few trees nearby shook and we all looked in that direction. The shaking moved towards us until it was just out of our sight. Then it stopped.

“RRAAAAAAAAWW!!” *Is that a...bugbear?* The massive creature stepped from behind the trees and faced us with hungry eyes. *I forgot that was even a thing.* I spread my wings wide and unsheathed my ankle blades. All the other guards did the same as they prepared for combat.

“HAAAAAA!” A young male voice rang out as a griffin impacted the bear like creature. The big bear hit the ground as the young black colored griffin started tearing into it with his claws. He had a black lion half, with brown feathers on his head.

“UUUURRR!!” We all watched, stunned, as the young griffin tore out the bears neck. It gasped a few times before falling dead.

“Nice kill Dark!” A older voice shouted from above. An adult griffin landed beside the freshly killed bugbear. He had a brown lion half and a brown head. “Very quick and clean! I’m proud of you! Now let’s get this thing back to town.”

“AAAAAAAAAAHH!!” One of the guards in golden armor screamed before running headfirst into a tree. I covered my face with a wing as the griffins looked over in surprise. The guard hit the ground

unconscious as a limb fell on top of him.

“Hello! We come in peace!” Shouted Luna. The griffins looked at each other before the older one nodded at the young one. The young one, Dark I assumed, flew off while the adult approached us.

“I apologize, I didn’t see you there. Were you hunting this animal? I’m sorry if we stole your kill.” He cautiously stated, ready to bolt at a moments notice.

“Oh no, we weren’t hunting. It did startle us though, we were preparing to fight it off when you came down.” Luna looked at the dead bugbear. “I must thank you for that. We are new to these lands, I’m sure you can tell.” She smiled at the griffin. “My name is Princess Luna, might I have your name?” She waited expectantly.

“Yes, my name is Silent Wood.” He looked at all of our guards. “May I assume you arrived by ship? From the unknown lands?”

“If you mean the lands to the west, then yes. We hail from the kingdom of Equestria. We wish to establish diplomatic ties with your rulers.” She look around the forest. “Would you know where to go in order to get an audience with them?”

“Well you see-“ Silent started. He was interrupted as griffins in iron armor landed all around us. There must have been fifty, outnumbering us by two to one.

“Halt! By order of the Pri-!” The guard was interrupted as a crossbow bolt pierced his chest armor.

“FOR THE KING!!!” Fifty more griffin fell from the sky and attacked the iron clad ones. These new griffins were wearing a much thicker iron armor, yet it didn’t seem to impede them at all. As the area around us turned into a small battleground, we stood in the middle of it all with Silent. We only moved when we had to avoid a griffin hitting us on accident. The new griffins killed the other ones extremely fast, the battle only lasting for a few minutes. “Hah! Take that you scoundrels!” The same Griffin spoke as the last of their enemy flew off. He urned to look at us. “Now, what do we have here?”

‘Well, you’ve got a pony princess, a giant bird, an patrol of griffins, and a single hunter. I’m still waiting for the punch line honestly.’ The situation was so ridiculous that I said the first thing that came to my head. ‘We’re here to have a diplomatic talk with your leader. Although, it appears you may have a....situation with that. Am I right?’ The griffin leader just gaped at me. *Oh boy.* I sighed. ‘Luna? Could you please explain it to him?’

“Certainly Night.” Luna stepped forward, taking the leader’s attention away from me. She cleared her throat before speaking. “What he said.”

“Bu-wha-I....” He closed his mouth before speaking again. “My name is Crimson Blade. Please, follow me.” He started walking off through the woods. As we followed, the rest of the griffins surrounded us on all sides. One of the other guards had picked up the unconscious guard and was carrying him on their back. *No end to the excitement. At least I’ll never be bored.*

We all sat in a large dining room. We had walked for hours in the woods before arriving at the port city nearby. It was just behind some cliffs, so we didn’t see it from the ocean. The city also held the king’s castle so that was a plus! Sort of. Me and Luna sat across from King Dusk Song. He had a black lion half, and dark purple feathers. He was currently staring at us from across the long table. He tapped his claws on the table as he stared at us. None of us had spoken once since we arrived in the room. That was three hours ago. The moon had long since risen, thanks to Luna, and the king just continued to stare at us. The only reaction he had shown was when Luna rose the moon, and he mostly looked irritated. The long oak table was covered in a red cloth and nothing else except for the king’s golden goblet. I decided enough was enough. ‘Your majesty, we are here to-‘

“Be silent.” He said in a deep voice. *Excuse me?* I did a better job at hiding my irritation than Luna did.

“We have co-“ Luna attempted to say.

“Be silent!” The king said louder. “I am trying to decide what to do

with you.” His eyes narrowed. “A creature who controls the moon? I will not be deceived by your clever trickery. And the inbred spawn of peasants?” He looked at me. “I must simply decide what to do with a liar and her deformed friend.” He laughed. “A kingdom across the sea? Ruled by princesses who raise the sun and moon? How stupid do you think I am!?”

‘Very!’ I glared at him. ‘We will be leaving now. I advise you don’t follow.’ Me and Luna stood up to leave only for the king to start laughing.

“Oh you won’t be leaving.”

“And why is that?” Luna was beyond mad. Her mane had actually started to shift a little, like it wanted to start floating.

“Because, I have your little guards held captive, and you have no way to escape.” He chuckled “unfortunately for you, I don’t have time to deal with ridiculous things like this.” He slammed his claw down on the table, and the doors opened as guards rushed in. We were surrounded quickly as the king smirked at us. *He doesn’t think we can hurt him.* I kept my face neutral. “Take them to the gallows. We shall have a hanging in the morn.” Me and Luna looked at each other. We both nodded at what we had to do.

“Yes your majesty! Right awa-AAAAH!” The griffin guards wing was removed as I swung my wing up. I used magic to harden my feathers and spun in a circle. The guards around me fell as feathers pierced their necks. Luna simply made an expanding forcefield and smushed the griffin on the walls. The king now looked slightly worried.

“Guards!” He called. More guards ran in but it was too late. I took to the air with Luna following me. With one last glare at the king, I flew through the windows in the dining room. Luna followed after me as I glided over the city. I saw our guards fighting in the streets below. There were too many for us to fight, and more were coming. I made a quick decision. I slowed down till I was beside Luna.

‘Drop down when we get above them. Don’t open your wings till I say.’ I looked back to see the griffins chasing us.

“What? What are you planning to do-“

‘NOW!’ I folded my wings and Luna closed hers as well. We dropped from the sky at an ever increasing rate. Luna looked worried, but didn’t open her wings. The soldiers below us grew closer and closer. Iron looked up and locked eyes with me. Then he looked down and got the others to form a circle for us to land in. Still we grew closer. Luna was panicking now.

“Night! When do we open-“

‘Open open open!!!’ My wings snapped open and I felt the joints strain against the air. Luna had a pained look on her face, but she held her wings open. We were still going down fast, but we were slow enough to not die when we hit the ground. THUMP! We impacted the stone road in the middle of our group. And in a flash we, as well as a few griffins, disappeared.

Dusk Song

I stared out the broken window in disbelief. I had been so quick to assume that they were lying....*I think I’ve made a large mistake.* I had insulted the leader of another kingdom, and very badly. Then I threatened to hang them. But then they did those impossible things, and I realized how much trouble I had caused. *I can’t afford this. Not with the rest of my kingdom slipping away. My son taking things from my kingdom!*

I growled as I threw my cup across the room. *The towns are slipping from my manipulation. I control less every day. And all because of his stupid kindness and generosity! Who ever cared about those things!?* I paced around the room. *I need to be rid of him. He is taking away my kingdom, my power! No one can rule these lands but me! I looked out the window once more. I will win, just wait and see.*

Nightwing

We impacted the wooden ship deck hard. The ponies on the ship looked up in surprise before tackling the griffins. Lotus rubbed her

head as she stood up. “I’m guessing it didn’t go well.” She then collapsed, unconscious.

Author's Notes:

This is what I imagine the solar guard screaming like.

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=QhrPNp1yod4>

So how was this chapter? I don’t know if I like how it turned out....

Griffin Prince

We had attempted to go out to sea after we got on the ship, however the griffins didn't like that. We were now being escorted down the coast by two large ships, all armed with cannons. We couldn't fight back because our ship would be decimated. And we couldn't carry all of the ponies on the ship. I certainly couldn't teleport all of us, and we couldn't swim forever. So we made our way further south until we reached a large port city. We were lead into the bay, and the ships closed off the entrance behind us. As soon as we pulled up to the docks we were boarded by a very large number of griffins in armor. One stepped up to the front with a gold crown on his head. "Ah! You must be the creatures that caused such a stir in the kings city! Let me introduce myself! My name is Prince Midnight Glory. I welcome your to our fine city as thanks for what you have done!" He bowed before us before standing upright again. Me and Luna just stared tiredly at the griffin in front of us.

"So, let me clarify this. You are happy that we made trouble for the king, and we are welcome to stay in your town?" Luna tiredly asked. "If I may, I would assume you are the prince going against the king?"

"Why yes, I am! He has ruled for far to long with an iron fist. I am freeing the lands from his rule." He smiled at us. "You have done us a great service! Many have left the king after what you did."

"May we perhaps be able to get a place to sleep for a few days? Then we would like to discuss things with you. Our...experiences have left us very tired." Luna wearily explained.

"Of course! Free of charge!" He turned around to face his guards. "Guards! Take these kind beings to someplace they can lay their heads down!" The guards surrounded us and started guiding us off the ship. I looked around at all the guards around us. All of Luna's guards were looking nervous at all the griffins. To be honest, I was nervous as well. However, I didn't have much choice. I stayed directly behind Luna as we were led down the docks. We could only

hope this meeting would go better.

"I am very glad you brave souls had traveled to our country." The black griffin prince said. "As you know, we are having a bit of a dispute in our lands. Between the tyrant king and I." He took a sip of his drink as me and Luna sat across from him. We were seated at a large wooden table in a huge dining room. The walls were made of stone, with large wooden rafters. The rafters had a chandelier hanging above the table, and the enormous windows showed the red sky as the sunset.

"And what do you hope to accomplish with this war?" Luna asked. "To secure power for yourself?"

"Well of course!" The prince laughed. *At least he's honest.* "When I become king, I shall treat my subjects with the respect they deserve! I will lead this country to glory once more, instead of poverty!" He sighed and stared into his cup. "Alas, things have not gone at I had hoped they would. This war has lasted two years instead of a few short months. My future wife has ran away, and I fear the war may last for years more."

My eyes widened at the wife comment. "Aaack!" I choked on my drink.

"Are you ok?" Luna asked me as the prince looked on.

'Yes yes, I'm fine. Just choked.' The prince laughed.

"It seems your friend cannot handle his mead!" He took a large gulp of his drink. "I can only hope Golden is ok..." *Does he really love her? It seems as though he does....* "Anyways! On to happier topics! What land do you hail from?"

"We come from the west. Our country is Equestria." Luna explained. "We have come in search of new lands, and hopefully allies. We certainly did not expect to stumble into a war such as this." She looked down at her drink and took a sip. "Your naval power is quite impressive. I propose an exchange."

“What exchange would this be?” The prince asked.

“A simple exchange of knowledge. Your knowledge of ships for our knowledge of magic.” Luna looked straight at the prince.

“A tempting proposal, however, we griffins cannot use magic. As such, your knowledge would be of no use to us.” The griffin looked disappointed. “A shame really. Magic would help us greatly in this war..” He looked up at Luna and I. “However, if you and yours were able to help in this war.....well, suffice to say, it would be over very quickly.”

“I’m sorry, but we cannot get involved in your war. We come seeking peace, not war.” Luna thought for a moment. “What about a trade a of weapons then? We will not get directly involved in your war, but.....maybe we could give you the blueprints to several weapons that will surely speed things along.”

“Very well, you have my attention.” Prince Midnight stated.

“What do you think Night? They are your designs after all.” Luna looked over to me.

‘I see nothing wrong with it. If you want to, you are welcome to give him the designs.’ *Oh boy. I hope this doesn't backfire.*

“Very well! Might I have some paper Prince Midnight? I shall draw the plans at once.” Luna declared.

“You remember the designs from memory?” The prince motioned to a serpent and he ran off. “You must have a good memory concerning such things.” I could see Luna blush slightly.

“Yes, well...We must do everything we can to keep our subjects safe. And I will admit, I do have a knack for remembering battle strategies.” She blushed a little more. “However, anyone can remember something with practice. It’s nothing special.”

“Of course.” Midnight smiled. The servant ran back into the room with a stack of paper. “Ah, here are the supplies you requested.” The servant set down the paper, along with an inkwell, beside Luna. Luna promptly reached over and plucked one of my feathers. *I don't*

even care anymore. I've been desensitized to the pain of losing feathers by this point.

After just a few minutes of drawing Luna had finished the designs. "Here you are, I hope you use them wisely." Luna warned.

"Of course." The prince smiled. "I thank you for your help, and I hope you have a pleasant trip home." Luna turned to leave, but paused after a second. I could see her biting her lip. She spun around to look at the prince.

"I would give you one more thing Prince Midnight." She reached down to the sword sheathed around her waist. It was one of the few blades made of blue steel. As she unsheathed the blade, the guards around the room all drew there swords. A wave from Midnight made them sheath them once more, though they all stood stiffly. "A blade forged of Blue Steel. One of the few made. Observe." She stabbed the end of the sword into the table, causing all the guards to jerk towards there swords. They all stopped though as it was clear she wasn't attacking. Prince Midnight watched with wide eyes as frost spread over the wood table, coming from where the sword struck. Thin wisps of fog ran over the edge of the table, like dry ice. Luna easily pulled the sword out and put a look of concentration on her face. After a moment, Midnight appeared on the sword. "Simply think of who you want to see while holding this sword, and they shall appear." Luna sheathed the sword once more, then unbuckled the sheath from her waist and slid it across the table. Midnight grabbed it and held it up with reverence.

"I thank you Princess Luna. May your travels bring you much fortune. I wish you safe journeys." He appeared thoughtful for a moment. "Actually, I have something I wish to offer you as well."

Author's Notes:

Sorry for the wait people! I really am. How was this chapter?

P.s. CommodoreDread edited this chapter!

Dark Waters

‘So why did you give him the blueprints Luna?’ I asked as I stood beside the ship’s railing. The ship the Prince had given us sailed along side us. Luckily we had enough ponies to man, or pony, both ships.

‘I’m not sure Night.’ Luna looked out over the ocean. ‘Maybe I just trusted him enough.’

‘HMMMM.’ I thought aloud. ‘Bull.’

‘Wha-! You- I-How dare.....!’ Luna shut her mouth as she glared at me. A tinge of red slowly spread across her cheeks. ‘Fine!’ She looked out over the sea once more. ‘Perhaps....I li...’ she finished so softly I couldn’t hear her.

‘What was that?’ I looked at her, highly amused.

‘I said! Perhaps I liked.....’

‘Still didn’t catch that.’

‘I liked him! Ok!? There! I said it!’ The whole ship stopped and stared at Luna’s outburst. I even saw some ponies watching from the other ship. They all shrugged after a few seconds and continued working. Luna looked down at the deck, ashamed.

‘What blueprints did you give him?’ I asked with a neutral face.

‘Just the catapult. And my sword....’ I hummed as I thought about what she said.

‘Very well, as your guard captain, and brother, I can only advise you be careful. You walk on a dangerous path Luna. Please be careful.’ I turned to go down into the ship.

‘Your not upset at me?’ Luna looked up hopefully. She looked ready to cry. I sighed and turned back around to face her.

“Luna, you’re an adult now. As much as I don’t like it, I can’t stop you from falling in love.” I breathed out hard and looked at the sky. The sun was painting the clouds red as thunder heads formed behind us. *We need to hurry if we want to outrun that storm.*

“KEEEAAARRR!!!” I screeched to get the attention of the crew. ‘Full sails! We have a storm coming!’ The crew started rushing around the ship, soon followed by the other ship’s crew. The two large sails on our ship were raised and two of three were raised on the griffin ship. I faced Luna once more.

‘You might want to get below deck. We may hit rough seas.’ I turned away to go below deck, and once again stopped. ‘Remember Luna. No matter what happens, I will always love you and Tia.’ I stepped down the stairs to go below deck. I walked down one flight to the middle deck, then went down the hall to the last room. I couldn’t smell anything but salt here. The rough wood made clicking noises as I walked across it. The ship groaned around me as I opened the door to my room and stepped inside. *What a day.* I closed the door and fell onto my bed. I drifted off to sleep quickly.

"Rrrrrrrreeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee!!!" A faint screeching woke me from my sleep. I looked around, startled, trying to find the source of the noise. *Weird. Someone must have slid a crate across the deck.* I promptly fell back asleep.

“Captain Night!! We need help!” A crew member busted into my room, waking me instantly.

‘What!? What’s wrong!?’ I swung my head back and forth, hearing the crashing waves and sound of torrential rain.

“The storm sir! It’s caught up with us!” I rushed out of my room and down the hall. My feet crashed on the steps as I opened the door to the deck. I was almost blew back by the wind and rain. I fought my way onto the deck to see Luna trying to command the crew. I smiled as she did an excellent job of giving orders. Her loud voice rang above the rain.

“Secure those ropes! You, row down that loose cargo!” Luna walked

confidently across the deck. "I want pegasi keeping the mast safe from lightning! Get up there!" She paused as a massive wave washed over her. As the wave fell flat on the deck she stood strong. Her wet mane hung over her shoulders and teeth grit as she looked around with steely eyes. I started to make my way over to her when the ship rocked dangerously. *What the..?* I stumbled as the ship tilted once again. Then the singing started, and all hell broke loose.

"AAAAAAAaaaaaaAAAAAAAHHHH!" A chorus of voices cried out in song. Three Hippocampi jumped over the boat and into the water on the other side. One was blue, one was yellow, and the last one was pink. *Are you kidding me!? Why today of all days? Starswirl isn't even here to banish them!*

"KKEEEEAAAARRRR!!!" I shrieked at them. They actually paused midair to look at me. 'Go away! Can't you go, I don't know, attack a whale or something!?!?' I glared at them. Today was just not a good day. They looked at each other, then back at me. Then they dropped back into the water and kept singing. *Welp, there goes the easy way of doing things.* I prepared my self to defend against both the sirens and the crew. In the show they made ponies get mad or something right?

"Splash!" I looked over to my left to see ponies having a brawl. Strangely, in was mostly the stallions fighting. A mare approached me from behind, startling me as I watched the fight.

"Captain!"

"KKKEKEEAARRR!!" I jumped into the air. 'What!?' I spun around to face the mare.

"We've taken on too much water sir! We can't keep up with the other ship! Any more and we'll sink." She ran off to try and break up the fight behind me.

"CRRRRAAACK!" I looked up just in time to dodge a mast. I looked at the siren who knocked it over as she disappeared beneath the waves once more. *Ok, new plan.* I quickly located Luna in the crowd. I took off just as some ponies crashed into the spot I was standing in. I flew over the crew and grabbed Luna as I flew by.

“Night! What are you doing!?” Luna shouted at me as I carried her off the ship.

‘Go! Get to safety!’ I threw her onto the griffin ship. I flew between the masts and slashed through the rope holding the third sail closed. The ship picked up speed immediately, going in the direction of Equestria. *Now to deal with the pesky seahorses.* I rocketed back to our ship, sitting lower in the water than recommended. As I flew back to the ship, one of the sirens jumped out of the water. I slashed the yellow creature with a blade as I flew by. She shrieked and fell back into the water. *Now, I just need to banish them to the Equestria girls universe. Simple.*

The sirens were targeting me now. The pink one jumped at me from below. A kick with my ankle blades sent her back into the ocean. *Starswirl is too far away to assist me in this problem.* The yellow one jumped past me and tried to fall on me. I strafed right and she fell past me onto the blue one trying to bite me from below. *Could I teleport them?* I dodged a red laser beam. *Worth a try.*

I landed on the wet and slippery deck and ran up to the first mare I could find. ‘You! Distract the sea monsters!’ I shoved her in the general direction of the sirens. ‘Get the others to help you!’

“Yes sir!” The unicorn ran off, shooting lasers at the siren whenever she could. *Ok! Focus!* I began concentrating on the sirens and where I wanted them to go. I felt the magic building up inside me, though it was slow. I was asking for a lot. A teleport spell across dimensions if I was correct. The sirens roared as they fought the ponies providing the distraction. Once I gathered the needed energy, I waited for the right moment. Luckily, it didn’t take long. All three sirens jumped out of the ocean with roars of rage. I released the magic in with a large pulse of blue light.....only for nothing to happen. *Oh come o-!!*

“SSSSSHHHHH POP!!!” A small hole ripped in the sky and began sucking in air. Inside the hole I could see what I guessed was earth. The equestria girls version that is. *Sooo, not a teleportation spell.* All around it I could see space. *Maaaaaaybe I need to make it a bit closer to the planet.* I concentrated and the image on the portal shifted to a street behind a building. *Perfect!!* The sirens tried to run away

from the portal. But the suction was too strong for them to resist. I moved to portal towards them slowly.

‘Come on! Just go in the portal!!’ They finally succumbed to the great pull of the portal and fell in. ‘HAHA! I just banished a bunch of sirens!! I’ve never felt so alive!!!’ Then the adrenaline wore off.

Author's Notes:

Edited by CommodoreDread
How was this chapter?

Portals

Silver Wing

I looked back as Night fought the wendigo like creatures. He had cut the ropes on our sails, so we couldn't slow down and wait for the battle to end. Add that to the fact that the other boat was sitting very low in the water, and the situation didn't look very good. I watched as Night dodged the creatures and slashed at them when he could, but the battle was getting hard to see very quickly. Our ship was speeding up because of a strong wind. "Should we help him?" I asked Black iron as he stood beside me. Even though I was the second in command, we had strict orders to stay with Princess Luna. But the fight was with Night Wing and he may have needed help. The battle wasn't even visible now.

"Let's just wait and see what happens. Our orders were clear." Right as Iron said this, a large pulse of magic rippled through the air.

"That's it! I'm going to help him! Forget the consequences, my friend needs help." I jumped up onto the railing. "And I'm going to help him." With that I took off in the direction of the other ship. I rocketed through the air on my leathery wings as rain beat on my fur. In a matter of seconds I was able to see the ship again.

Above the wooden ship was a slowly shrinking portal that was pulling in stray pieces of wood wreckage. I saw Night falling into the sea as he blacked out, and raced forward to grab him. I impacted him just as he hit the surface of the water and we both went under. I struggled to drag him back up to the surface.

"Gah!" I gasped for breath as our heads breached the waves once more. I panted as I slowly pulled us toward the boat. Someone must have saw us, because a rope was thrown over the side for us. I tied the rope around Night's waist and held on as it was pulled back up onto the ship. The wooden hull scraped against us as we were pulled over the side and landed in a wet pile. I jumped off of Night and checked to see if he was breathing. To my relief he was. "Oh thank Luna! I got to him in time."

I fell onto my back as ponies rushed around us. Many were carrying buckets as they attempted to drain the ship of water. "Are you alright?" Asked a pegasus that had helped pull us up.

"Yes, thank you for getting us onto the ship." I stood up and looked around the ship. "Set a course for home. It will take us a while with one less sail."

"Yes ma'am!"

Five Months Later

Night Wing

I sat in a large stone room with Starswirl. We were under the castle in a chamber Swirl had made to test his more dangerous spells. 'So, the teacher becomes the student. Very ironic.' I looked at Swirl with a smirk. He just scowled at me.

"Ok Night. Yes, it's very funny, haha. Now tell me how to do the spell already!" Swirl was not a happy pony at the moment.

'Ok ok!' I laughed. 'It similar to a teleportation spell, Just think about where you want to go.'

"Ok? Now what?" Swirl asked. I was teaching Starswirl the portal spell I used to banish the Sirens. I had finally figured out how I did it, and Swirl had been bugging me to teach him ever since.

'Now, focus on the area you're in now as well.' I stepped back in preparation for the portal to open. 'Now comes the hard part. It's going to take a lot of magic to open the portal, so be prepared for some mana burn.' I took another step back just In case.

Mana burn is something that happens to creatures when they use too much magic at one time. For a unicorn like Starswirl, it would take more magic to hurt him than most ponies. But even he had limits. 'Ok, when you're ready charge up your magic and try to connect both locations together.' Swirl's horn started glowing brightly for a moment. Then lightning flashed from his horn and started hitting the walls. His mane and tail floated up as if gravity

reversed, and a small window opened up in the air in front of him. I could see Starswirl panting as sweat ran down his face. ‘Easy Swirl, don’t push yourself too hard.’ The window grew bigger, showing a cave containing a crystal tree.

Energy started shooting from the sides of the portal, and the edges started to shrink and expand. The pulsating sped up until the whole portal was undulating rapidly. ‘Ok Swirl, I think you should stop now.’ I looked at Swirl as he didn’t stop. Instead he glared determinedly at the portal and focused even more magic into his horn. ‘SWIRL! That enou-!’ “KEEEEEAAAAACK!!!” I started to shriek as the portal imploded. I say started, because a bolt of energy shot out and vaporized the left half of my neck. I now lay on the floor as I thrashed in pain.

“AAAAAaaaaaAAAAAACK!!!” I tried to shriek but I just choked as I slowly stopped moving.

“Sweet Celestia! Night! Are you ok!?” Swirl ran to my side.

‘Does it look like I’m ok!?’ I barely managed to write on my wing. I couldn’t move anymore. I was so tired. My eyes slowly closed and I stopped breathing.....

Luna

I knew something was wrong when my bluesteel breastplate changed color. A small spot of black appeared in the center, and from the dot tendrils of darkness spread out. The tendrils reached the edges of the armor and began to expand in a swirling motion until the whole thing was pure black. Then Starswirl ran into the dining room and started gibbering about spells and mana explosions. Me and Celestia looked at each other, then back to Starswirl with worried looks.

“Starswirl, what happened?” Celestia asked Coolly. He finally stopped to take a breath. Then he said something neither of us expected.

“I killed Night Wing!” Starswirl yelled. Then he fainted on the floor.

We both rushed over to him to check on him.

“He has sever Mana Burn around his horn.” Celestia observed. “He must have been testing a powerful spell.” Then what he said clicked in my head.

“Night!” I yelled out, then ran out of the room. There was only one place Swirl would test such a powerful spell.

Third Person

In the forest nearby, a large whirlwind of snow and ice appeared. It moved through the forest and froze everything it touched. It gained speed as it shot through the trees and it seemed it would never stop. Then it hit a tree and exploded, freezing everything in the area. In the middle of the explosion was a large bird that seemed to be made of space. His name was Night Wing. Night Wing was not a happy bird. Night Wing was, in fact, an angry bird.

Author's Notes:

How was this chapter? I wasn't sure when my editor would be back (he's been gone a few days.) so I just decided to put the chapter out. Please tell me what you think!

Served Cold

Luna

I paced around the dining hall rapidly as i thought about what happened. I had tears going down my face as i tried to deny the events that had transpired. "Its going to be fine Luna!" I told my self. "He-He-He will probably be fine! He was fne last time he got killed! Yes! Thats right, he'll be absolutely fine!" Celestia watched from the table alongside Starswirl. He still had his head leaned miserably on the table.

"Luna!" Tia called out to me. I stopped pacing and looked at her. "Night will be fine, ok?" She tried to reassure me. *I know hes been dead before, but.....if he can just come back to life, why has he been gone so long?* I started pacing again. *What if...What if he could only do it one time?* These thoughts continued to plague me even as the doors burst open.

"We came as fast as we could!!" Black Iron shouted out Silver wing, Moon Beam, and Luna Lotus ran in beside him. "What happened!?"

"Is Night ok!? Where is he?" Silver frantically looked around as Moon and Lotus looked at each other in worry. I just stopped and pointed at a cloth covered lump on the table. "No....." Silver ran up to the table and yanked back the cloth. The others followed her as I sat down and cried. Night lay on the table, cold amd still. His feathers had turned pitch black when he died. His eyes where closed and he had an almost peaceful look on his face.

"You....." Silver turned to look at Starswirl. She had murder in her eyes, and all could see it.

"Silver!" Tia shouted. "Don't do anything you'll regret."

"Oh don't worry princess. I won't regret it." Silver lept at Swirl, intent on choking to life from him. Just before her hooves touched him she stopped midair. "What the-!?" She looked down to see a yellow telekinesis field holding her. "Grrrr! Let me go!" Swirl didn't

even look up from his position as Celestia held back Silver.

“That’s enough!” Celestia’s voice rang out through the room. Everyone stopped what they were doing and stared at Celestia. “Now, I believe there has been enough death today. Silver, I’m going to let you down. And when I do, I expect you to stand still and be silent!” Tia unceremoniously dropped Silver onto the table. She scrambled to her hooves and stood stiffly.

“We don’t know for sure if Night is really dead or not.” Tia started, “What do you mean? Hes right here!” Lotus cried out.

“Be silent!” Celestia yelled. Everyone, including me, pinned their ears onto their head. “Night has been dead before. The shadow killed him, and he came back to us. So, with that knowledge, I believe he will do so again. He can come back like a phoenix, and like a phoenix it will most likely be bright and flashy when he comes back.” Celestia took a breath. “I want you to take several guards with you and search the forest. It shouldn’t be hard to find where he is.”

Iron snapped a salute. “Yes ma’am, we will leave at once.” He walked up to the grief stricken Silver and dragged her out the door behind him. Lotus and Moon looked at Night’s body once more before leaving as well.

“I hope you’re right sister. I really do.” I told Tia. I walked over to the table and sat down beside Night.

Night Wing

I shot through the sky towards the castle. The cool night air whistled past me as the tree tops blurred by. *I can’t believe Swirl killed me!* I dodged around a tall tree and continued toward the castle. *When someone says, ‘Hey! You should stop!’ You should probably stop! Especially when you’re dealing with dangerous magic!* I rose up higher in the sky, breaking through the cloud layer.

The clouds were thick tonight and the moon reflected off of them

beautifully. It actually helped me to calm down as I flew over them. *Even if I did just get killed, I can't say I regret being here.* I slowed down and glided over the silvery sea. *I have a family again. And I get to do and see things that I never could on earth.* I descended into the tops of the clouds, letting them flow over my wings as I flew. I could see the castle through a hole in the clouds, it wasn't very far now.

I had calmed down during the flight, and didn't feel like strangling Swirl anymore. But that didn't mean I couldn't have revenge. I dove down toward Swirl's room and landed on the balcony quietly. I could see a lump through the window, slowly rising and falling under the sheets. *Puuuuuuurfect.* I opened the door slowly and slipped into the room. I quietly closed the door behind me and made my way over to the bed. *Now, how to do this....* I pondered Over what exactly I was going to do for a moment. *Aha!* I leaned over the bed and turned my feathers black. Then I made the feathers around my eyes glow red. I put my face right next to Swirl's and waited a moment.

"CHKCHKCHKCHK!" I made a loud clicking noise. Starswirl's eyes snapped open.

Luna

"AAAAAAAAAAAAH!!" A scream echoed through the castle. I jumped out of my bed and looked around my room. "AAAAAH!" *That sounded like Starswirl!* I ran out of my room and down the hall, all sorts of images flashing through my mind. *Did Silver come back for him!? Ooooh!* I ran even faster until I reached his door. Then I turned around and bucked it open. Nothing could prepare me for what I saw inside.

I saw Night standing to the side with an evil smile, and in the center of the room where two portals. One on the roof and one on the floor. Starswirl was falling through them with and ever increasing speed. "AAAAH!! Please! Stop! I already said I was sorry!"

"Hur hur hur!" Night just laughed as he fell even faster. 'Oh man, I

love portals!’ He looked at me. His smile quickly disappeared when he saw the tears on my face. ‘Luna! Are you ok!?’ He ran up to me and hugged me.

“I though you were gone!” I sobbed onto his shoulder. I cried harder than I ever had before. “I’m so glad your ok!” I squeezed him as hard as I could. I didn’t ever want to let him go.

“What’s going on in here!?” Celestia ran in. “What in the world.....” She stopped when she saw Starswirl falling. Then she saw me and Night to the side. “NIGHTWING!” She jumped onto us and hugged us. “Your back! I knew you would be ok. You had to be.” She sniffled as we all held each other. “I don’t know what we would do if your weren’t ok.”

“Somebody! Heeeeeeeelp!” Swirl yelled in the background. I ignored him as I hugged Night.

Night Wing

We all sat around the dining hall table. My old body was laid on the table like a dark version of myself. I picked up one of the talons and dropped it down again. It hit the solid wood with a THUMP.
‘Starswirl.’

“Yes?” He looked at me with sorrowful eyes.

“Why, when I told you to stop, did you not stop the spell?” I turned to glare at him.

“What?” Luna and Celestia both looked at Swirl as Celestia spoke up. “What exactly happened down in the lab?”

‘I’ll tell you what happened.’ I looked them in the eyes. ‘Starswirl made a mistake. A big one.’ I looked back at Swirl. ‘I was teaching him the portal spell, he has been begging me to teach him as you both know.’ I stood from the table and started pacing on the stone floor. ‘The spell required a lot of mana. I was confident Starswirl could handle it for a short while. And I was right. He opened up a portal successfully.’ I stopped pacing and looked at Swirl once

more. His mane was a mess and his eyes had bags under them. ‘But then it started to destabilize. He couldn’t keep that amount of mana flowing through his horn and keep it stable, not the first time he tried the spell. I did it on accident the first time I cast the spell. So the portal collapsed and the energy had to go somewhere. Unfortunately that somewhere was my neck.’ I walked up to my dead body and turned the head, showing the hole where the left side used to be.

“Night. I am so sor-.” Swirl began.

‘It hurt Starswirl. A lot. But you know what hurt more than choking to death?’ I spun around to face him, anger in my eyes. ‘What hurts more was that I got killed by my family, because they couldn’t listen to me.’ I walked up to him. ‘Why didn’t you stop Swirl? You had to know you couldn’t keep up the spell. You’ve been a mage for nearly a hundred years!’ I patiently waited for an answer.

“I....I was cocky.” He hung his head in shame. “For years I have been the powerful mage that everyone looks up to. I know more about magic than anyone, I have more practice and experience, and I have been alive for a very long time.” He looked back up at us. “So when you made a new spell.....well, how could I resist learning it? And when you finally agreed to teach me.....I suppose I felt I could handle it with no problem. I have always done magic with ease, why would this be any different.” He looked down again. “Sadly I was very wrong. I thought I could do it perfectly on the first try. I let my pride get the better of me. And it cost us all dearly.” He activated his magic and levitated off his wizard hat. He spun it in front of him as he stared into space.

“I am not going to live forever, in fact I fear my time will come soon. And as much as it pains me to do so.....I must step down as the royal mage. There are other ponies that are better suited for this position.” He sighed. “I am sorry Night. I do hope you can forgive me for this mistake.” He set his hat on the table and looked at us sadly. He stood from the table and walked toward the door. We all watched as he left, unable to say anything. *I'm sorry as well Swirl. And I already have forgiven you. I just don't want you to make this mistake again.*

Just before Swirl reached the door, it opened in front of him. Silver, Iron, Lotus, and Moon walked in as he walked out. Silver gave him a glare but said nothing as they approached the table. “Your majesties, we have found a clearing in the for-.” Silver stopped as she noticed me. The next thing I knew I was on the floor as she hugged me. “Thank the sky your ok!” She squeezed me more.

“So, he really does come back huh?” Lotus thought out loud. She smiled as she walked over to me. “Well Captain, this is one of the few times I’ve been happy I didn’t get a promotion.”

“You wouldn’t have been promoted if Night died.” Iron raised an eyebrow at Lotus.

“Oh shut it Blacky.” She smirked at him. “You’re ruining the moment.”

Author's Notes:

How was this chapter? Jest helped me right this one.

True Love

Three Months Later

I opened the door that morning expecting to have a cheerful happy day. I forgot I lived with two young Princesses. As I stepped out of my room and into the hall, the door slammed into my face. I staggered back as I heard the sound of giggling pass my door and continue down the hall. I steadied myself just in time to see a blue leg disappear around the corner. *Oh boy. Do I even want to know?* I shook my head and followed the leg around the corner. Every time I turned a corner I would see a leg disappear down another hall. I followed it all the way to the throne room, where a happy Luna was prancing in place.

“Oh I'm so excited Celestia! He'll be here any minute!” Luna happily shouted. *He?* I instantly lost what good mood I had left.

“Caw!” I called out just as Celestia opened her mouth. ‘And who is this **he** you speak of?’ I narrowed my eyes at Luna, which she either didn't notice or ignored.

“Welllllll!” She giggled....Luna never giggles. That's Celestia's job. I was liking this **he** less and less by the minute. “You've met him before!” She smiled at me. I looked back at her with narrowed eyes. A guard dropped his spear on the other side of the room. We all looked at him as he tried to grab it. Every time he reached to grab it he just kicked it farther away. I would have laughed had the situation been any different.

When he finally grabbed it he ran back to his post with a blush in his face. He tried to act like nothing happened, but when he saw all of us looking he looked down at the floor in shame. I looked back to Luna only to find her gone. So I looked at Celestia instead. ‘Who is this ‘he’ Luna speaks of?’ I asked her. She just sighed and shook her head at me.

“You have to let her love Night. You can't protect her forever.” She looked towards the door as a trumpet sounded outside. “Besides,

'he' is already here. Please try to behave Night. This is important to Luna." She looked down at me as the doors started to open. "Besides, you may like him once you get to know him."

I turned around to see who had entered and my jaw dropped.

This is the most awkward breakfast I have ever had. Luna was sitting across from me as usual. Celestia was at the head of the table and Luna was to her left. Prince Midnight Glory sat to Luna's left. Luna and Midnight were talking to each other about events in his kingdom and ours, Celestia was eating a salad, and I was eating a cooked chicken. The bone in the chicken leg snapped as I watched Midnight lean over and kiss Luna on the cheek. Said bone was pulverized when Luna blushed and giggled in response.

Celestia was calmly eating her salad, but I saw her glance at me when the bone snapped. 'I don't like him.' I wrote so only she could see it. She hid a small smile as she continued eating. The guards, both pony and griffin, noticed me glaring at Midnight. He had brought his own guards of course, he was royalty as well. Although, if what I was hearing him tell Luna was correct, he was technically a king now. He had just finished the campaign against the former king a month ago.

The pony guards were nervously looking between me, the ice slowly overtaking my chair, and the griffin guards. The griffin guards were just glaring at me, daring me to do something to Midnight. I was tempted to take that dare.

"So! Night Wing! How has the world treated you since we last met?" Everyone except Celestia and Luna jumped as Midnight spoke to me. I shook my head to clear my thoughts.

'I have been well. And you?' I curtly responded.

"I have been well. My kingdom is progressing nicely, though we have had to deal with a few small rebellions. They were, as I said, small and easy to deal with. Thankfully no injuries were obtained and all the conflicts were resolved peacefully." He paused to look closely at me. "But, surely you have had something interesting

happen while I was away.”

‘Not much really. A few minor scuffles with some forest animals, a stolen apple or piece of bread here and there.’ I paused to take a sip of drink. ‘I have also been hunting lately. I plucked a few careless chickens that I caught in areas they had no right to be in.’ The table jumped suddenly.

“What was that?” Midnight looked at the table.

“Oh, I’m sorry. I have developed a small muscle twitch in my leg.” Celestia looked down at her leg with a pained expression. “I fear all this running a kingdom has made me rather tense.” Midnight nodded in understanding.

“I do hope you feel better then. Perhaps take some time off?” He looked at Luna. “Luna is plenty smart enough to take over for a day or two.” He and Luna looked at each other lovingly.

“Thank you for the suggestion, I may consider it.” Celestia smiled as she continued to eat her food. I smiled as I tried to ignore the pain from Celestia kicking me. Hooves are hard.

The rest of the meal went on in relative silence, with only a few passing conversations between Midnight and Luna. I couldn’t wait for this day to be over.

I shadowed Luna and Midnight all day, making sure nothing happened between the two. All they did was walk around the town and talk to each other. Midnight bought Luna a present or two and opened doors for her. The ponies in town were not the happiest about a griffin, which they had never seen before, walking through the town. But being with a princess helped him with that. Eventually the two headed back to the castle as it turned to night. They made it back just as the sun disappeared below the horizon.

I flew up to my room and waited for them to come down the hall. My room was in the same hall as Celestia’s and Luna’s were. Soon I heard them approaching, and I listened through the door, ready to jump out if I needed to.

“Well, Midnight, This has been a wonderful day! Thank you so much for coming to visit!” Luna excitedly thanked him.

“It was no problem my sweet. I would do anything for you, you know that.” I could practically hear the love dripping of Midnight’s words. Any changelings nearby would be getting a feast if the love was real. *I don’t trust him.*

“My sister could take a lesson or two from you. She needs to take a vacation as well. We are not used to ruling yet, and I fear she is over stressing herself.” Luna sighed. “Enough of that though, it is time to retire for the night. My room is right here. If you wish we could stay up later and talk more.”

I tensed at that. *He better not....*

“Luna-“ Midnight started. I threw open the door and opened my mouth to shriek at him. “-That would not be proper. We have only just met this year. I will not share a room with you until we are married, if we get that far.” He turned toward me and started walking down the hallway. “I will see you in the morning Luna! Have a good night!” He walked until he got to my door, where he saw me with my beak open, ready to screech. “Are you well Night?”

I simply shut my beak and nodded to him. I turned around and walked back into my room, shutting the door behind me. I heard him walk away as I went to me bed. I pulled the covers back and laid down, thinking about what had happened. “You know.” Celestia said from right beside me. “You could have just scryed them. I don’t know why you were listening through the door.” The giant white horse that appeared suddenly in my bed scared me too much to be able to sleep that night.

Author's Notes:

Sorry for the wait, people! I got distracted with stuff. How was this chapter?

The Letter

The next morning I woke up slowly. I didn't really need sleep that often, but I was emotionally drained from the day before. I slid out of the bed and walked to the door. Just as my magic started turning the handle, my talon stepped on a piece of paper. Curious, I picked the letter off the floor in my telekinesis. It looked as though it had been slid under the door. I stuck my head out into the hall and looked both ways. Seeing no one, I looked back at the letter. A slight bit of concentration later and the envelope was ripped open with a burst of black magic.

I pulled the paper out and read it quickly. It seemed Prince Midnight was inviting me to his castle for a special event. It didn't say what the event was though. *Should I go?* It would provide more knowledge about what kind of being he was. But, then again, it was kind of suspicious. Who slides mail under doors? Unless it's something they don't want others to know about. *I'll deal with this later. I have a busy day.*

I stepped out into the hall and started toward the barracks at the back of the castle. The barracks were attached to the castle's backside so I didn't have to go very far. The guards I passed saluted me as I walked down the hall, elegant floral arrangements placed between them. My claws made slight clicking sounds on the marble floor that delighted me to no end. I reached the back of the castle quickly enough and pushed open the door to the barracks. All the soldiers near the door shot out of their bunks and saluted me. 'At ease.' They sat back down and continued their card game but kept watching me just in case.

I walked up to a bunk in the back of the room, where two ponies lay sleeping. *They're still asleep? Ridiculous, I told them I would need their help today.* I reached out with my wings and shoved them both out of the bed.

"Ah!" One of them shouted as he hit the floor. The other one just rubbed his head as he stood up. I glared at the two day guards and

wrote on my wings. 'Get ready to go. We leave in five minutes.' I walked away and left out the door to the outside. The floor changed to grass as I exited the building and stood by the wall, waiting for the two rookies to join me. When they walked out of the stone doorway I didn't say anything as we all ascended into the sky, they knew the basics of what we were doing.

We flew up above the city's buildings, but stayed low enough to see what was happening on the streets. This altitude over the city was reserved for guards or other ranking officers. And of course the Princesses. Civilians had to fly at a high altitude unless it was an emergency or they got special clearance.

We zipped over the roofs of the town as we performed basic city watch duty. Our eyes watched the streets closely for anything unusual. The nervous guards behind me were relatively new, only having been guards for a month or so. I didn't normally work with the recruits, but Bullseye had asked me to work with these two. They were his cousins and I figured I would do him a favor after what we all went through together.

"HEY! STOP! THIEF!" I snapped my head in the direction the call came from and banked that way, the two guards trailing behind me. I saw two ponies running through the streets ahead of us with the rear pony yelling at the one in front. I looked at the two recruits behind me and nodded toward the left and right roads at the intersection coming up. They saluted and flew ahead to block the roads. I changed my appearance to match the sky and raced to block the road in front of the thief. He didn't see me as I flew over, but he did see the guards fly towards the intersection. *They need to work on flying lower.* I sharply turned as he turned down an alleyway and tried to disappear into the buildings. I angled my self down and shot down in front of him. I spun around to look at him, and grabbed his horn, lifting him up to eye level. My eyes widened as I saw the He was really a young mare. I dropped her as she started crying.

What are you doing young one? I noticed that wing writing was not effective when the pony you where talking to was looking down. I lifted her head up with a talon. I lifted my wing with the writing, so she could see it.

“I-I was hungry.” She stuttered as her tears started to fall quickly. “You’re not going to kill me are you?” She started sobbing on the ground.

Of course not little one. Come with me, we will get you fed. I lifted myself into the air a little and then grabbed her in my talons. I flew over the guards I sent down the street and let out a CAAAW! They started following me back to the castle, not commenting on the crying filly in my claws. As we reached the castle I motioned for them to go back to the barracks as I continued through a window near the dining hall. We flew through the large halls and landed in front of the dining room. I set her down gently and pushed open the doors. I picked her up with magic and set her down in one of the chairs at the table. I noticed how thin she looked and went to talk to the chefs.

I made my way to the kitchen and stopped the first pony I saw. *You, fix a meal for the young pony in the dining room. And send a messenger to Celestia.* I walked back out and sat down across from the little mare. She stared nervously at me as I stared back. I learned long ago, that even with a strangely flexible beak, my smiles could look creepy to ponies. Especially with my hawk shaped eyes. Hawks and eagles always did have angry looking eyes. Her stomach grumbled, and just in time the chef came out with a silver plate covered by a lid. He set the plate in front of the young pony and left without a word.

I grabbed the lid in my telekinesis and lifted it off. When she just stared at me with a hesitant look, I nodded toward the salad in front of her. She immediately dug into the meal and scattered leaves everywhere as her face slapped into the plate.

“Purrrrrrr” I gently let out. ‘Slow down, you can have more later if you want.’ She looked up and slowed down a little, but not much. I signaled to one of the servants by the wall. When the mare walked up to me I wrote instructions on my wing. ‘When she is done eating take her to get a bath. Don’t force her to do anything she doesn’t want to. When she is clean, give her more food if she wants it.’ I stood up as the servant nodded. I looked one last time as the filly kept eating before I walked out the door. *Celestia will handle that. I have business to attend to.*

I had to file a report on what we did this morning, respond to Midnight's letter, and plan a surprise for Luna in a few days. The ponies didn't celebrate birthdays like on earth. That was fine with me, none of my family did either. They did, however, acknowledge that they were a year older. And I just wanted a reason to give Luna something. I'd give Celestia something as well, even though she wasn't turning a year older. Celestia would turn nine in six months, and I would get her and Luna another gift. *Focus, it's already midday.*

I slouched at my desk in exhaustion. Mental exhaustion. I had filed the many reports required for what had transpired this morning. I had to remove funds from the royal treasury to pay the shopkeeper for his stolen goods. Then I had to sit in on a training session for the new recruits. **Then** I had to plan what I was going to get Luna. And I still had to respond to the letter. *You know what? The griffins have fast ships. They're probably home by now.* With that I scryed Midnight and opened a portal beside him. When I stepped out I had a sword pressed to my throat.

"Stand down!" I heard Midnight shout behind me. I turned to the guard as he sheathed his sword and glared at him. Then I turned to face the prince as he sat on his throne. "I'm sorry for the welcome Night Wing. You startled us all. Next time send a letter in advance, I would not want you to be run through by my men." *Ah yes, he doesn't know I don't die. Gooooooooood.*

'Don't worry yourself so much Prince. I was too tired to send a message ahead.' I looked around at the wood and stone throne room we were in. 'I figured I would just come as soon as I could.'

"Yes well, I wasn't expecting a response for several more days. I suppose this means we get to hunt together sooner than expected!" He seemed genuinely happy by the revelation and motioned over a guard. "Clear my schedule tomorrow! We hunt at dawn!" He turned once more to me. "Please, follow me! I'll show you to your room."

He walked down from his throne and led me through a side door. "Apologies for not having the room fully ready yet. I didn't expect you for awhile." He walked to the end of the hallway and opened a

thick oak door. “Here is where you shall stay. Sleep well my friend. Now, I must be off. I have much to do in preparation for tomorrow.”

He closed the door and quickly walked away, leaving me alone. I examined the room I was placed in. It had stone walls with small flecks of crystal in them, and oak supports along the walls. There was a large bed on the right wall, and a window with an oak desk under it. That was it, the room was mostly empty. *Well, He did say it wasn't ready yet.* I laid in the bed and closed my eyes. *As Midnight said. I hunt at dawn.*

Author's Notes:

Sorry for the wait people. Things will start to move faster soonish. Expect timeskips and Twu wuv in coming chapters.

Griffin Hunting

The leaves crunched under our talons and claws as we walked through the thick forest. Midnight and I were in front, with three guards following behind us. The large Tasseler was feasting on a corpse just ahead of us. It looked like a large green wolf, but its head had four eyes instead of two. The two extra eyes were on its forehead, and instead of one tongue it had three long tentacle like appendages in its mouth. I believe it was the same type of creature we encountered the first time we came to the griffin lands.

CRACK! One of the guards stepped on a twig behind us. The beast's four ears turned to us. "RAAAAAAAAH!" It shrieked as its tongues shot out. I rolled right as a tendril shot by my head and wrapped around a guard. Midnight rolled left and pulled out a sword.

"HAH!" He yelled as he swung the sword in an arc, cutting off the tendril that was wrapped around the other griffin.

"REEEEEEEE!!" The Tasseler squealed as his tongue was severed. He lunged forward and tried to bite me, but I spun to the side and extended my wing blades into its side. "REEEEEEee." The tasseler gave one last squeal before falling silent. Midnight approached me beside the beast as the guards spread around the clearing.

"Haha! That was a wonderful hunt my friend!" He examined the cut I made across the Tasseler's side. "I see you are well practiced with your blades. Better than some of my captains." He turned and gave me a small smile. "I admire how well you suit the role of captain of the guard, even with your little experience."

"Thank you, and I admire how well you lead your kingdom. I have seen far worse leaders." I wrote for him to see. I didn't fully trust him yet. But I could still be friendly. At least until I figured out what he was up to. Then I would crush him.

Midnight's expression suddenly turned sad. "Unfortunately, I need to ask for your assistance with something. I hope you do not mind." *Oh boy. What does he need?* He turned away from while he thought

about what to say. "You see." He started, staring at the dead animal beside us. "I....How do you think I should ask Luna to marry me?!" He blurted out in defeat. Luckily for me, no one was looking my way, as I barely managed to stop my talons an inch from his throat. I forced on a way too big smile as I slammed my talon back onto the ground. The temperature in the clearing dropped a few degrees, and frost formed around my claws.

'I...am not sure how to answer that.' I wrote on my wing. If writing could be written in a forced fashion, like talking through grit teeth, then that's what my writing looked like at that moment.

'Unfortunately I cannot help you with that matter. Perhaps you should just....' I slapped myself repeatedly in my head for even participating in this conversation. 'Be yourself?'

"Yes, perhaps." He looked me in the eyes. "Thank you Night. I truly hope you can except me as family." He turned and motioned for his guards to pack up the meat from our expedition.

'Well, unfortunately, it seems I must be leaving.' I stepped back and prepared to open a portal. 'I do hope you understand. I enjoyed this adventure.'

"As did I Night. Besides, Luna and I have been sending letters to each other for nearly eight months. Her birthday is approaching, I plan to ask her then. I will see you on that day Night! May you have a peaceful return!" Midnight smiled at me. I smiled back as I opened a portal behind me and stepped through. As soon as it closed I dropped the smile and the entire forest clearing froze.

I hate being this unsure about something. Part of me wants to believe he is a good person. The other part doesn't. Some nearby trees shattered as I thought it through. Finally, I sighed. *There is no easy answer to this. I'll just have to wait and see what happens.* With that in mind, I took off and flew toward the castle.

One Week Later

Silver and I watched as ponies walked through the decorated streets of the Everfree. Everyone knew about Luna's party. The ponies

would use any excuse to celebrate something for the princesses. Even things they didn't normally celebrate, such as birthdays. It was amusing in a way, what they would do for the princesses. And, in the middle of all this, was the platoon of griffins marching through the streets. Rumors were already circulating about why they were here. Most were far from the truth, but a few were close. Only I knew the real reason why, or what I hoped was the real reason. And I suspected Luna **hoped** they were here for what she thought they were here for.

"I don't know Sir. I feel like something is going to happen. Something bad." Silver said as she sat on the roof beside me. I didn't want to admit it, but I felt the same way. *Something is going to happen. I don't know when, but it's going to be bad.*

'It's probably nothing.' Silver glanced at my wing.

"Yeah." She replies. "You're most likely right." Neither of us believed it, and we both knew the other was lying.

'Come on, let's go greet them at the castle door.' I took off with Silver following me. We uneasily made our way to the door at the end of the main road. We both just hoped things wouldn't get to bad.

Below us was Midnight, oblivious to the feelings of worry. He happily waved to ponies and smiled as he reach the front door. *Here we go.* I thought to myself as I pushed open the doors.

Third Person

Below the city, a large crystal tree pulsed in the dark. It went unnoticed by all as it prepared for the danger it sensed coming.

Author's Notes:

WOOHOO IM BACK BABY!!! I was so happy to get this chapter out. How was it? Big stuff is coming.

The Question

Night Wing

The doors flew open under a layer of black energy, allowing Midnight to enter the large castle entrance. He, along with his guards, walked in proudly. "Greeting Night Wing! How have you fared this past week?"

'Good, and you?' We met in the middle of the room and stopped in front of the other. Midnight was wearing an expensive looking black silk cape, with red trim. 'I see you have a fancy new outfit.'

"Of course! This occasion is momentous!" Midnight's eyes flickered over to my left and I turned to see Luna enter the room. She was wearing a dress I hadn't seen before, black with small amounts of glitter that resembled stars. It trailed the floor slightly as she walked up to the young prince.

"I'm so happy you're finally here!" She exclaimed loudly while hugging Midnight.

'Ok ok!' I jumped between them and forced them apart. This had the strange side effect of making everyone look at me strangely. 'We....need to go eat dinner. The cooks have worked hard on the meal and I haven't eaten all day.' I spun around and headed toward the dining room. Midnight and Luna quickly followed, though I made sure to position myself between him and her on the way there. Celestia joined us halfway to our destination, a large smile on her face.

"Ah Prince Midnight! So you have arrived at last! Luna has been very excited for your arrival in the castle." Luna blushed slightly at her sisters comment. "How is your kingdom doing?"

"It is well, and I see yours is growing steadily. You must be proud." He smiled at Celestia as I opened the dining room doors ahead of us. I sat beside Luna where I usually do, and Celestia across from her. As we settled into our seats I realized something. Midnight

would be sitting across from me for the whole of dinner. *Wonderful.* He sat down across from me, entirely too happy, and the chefs brought out silver platters with lids covering the food. Celestia and Luna's were opened to reveal salads as usual. Mine revealed a steaming piece of manticore, and Midnight's was something I ordered specially for him. He opened his lid to show a large turkey on the plate in front of him. I saw Celestia give me a hidden glare from across the table. I snickered to myself as she sat there, not moving. *Too far away for you to kick me this time.* Then I felt a large metal plate slam into my leg. I suppressed a grimace as I noticed her glare turn into a smug grin. *Oh you are so getting it later.*

"What a fine meal." Midnight ripped off a leg of the turkey and shoved it in his beak. "Tell your chefs their cooking is marvelous!" He complemented after swallowing. *How dense is he.....* I resisted the urge to slam my head on the table.

After eating we went to the ball room that had been decorated for the prince's arrival. A few nobles were already here and there, a few dancing to the violins playing in the corner. "May I?" Midnight bowed before Luna and extended his claw to her.

"Of course." She giggled. She grabbed his claw and they walked off into the small crowd, spinning into a slow dance. I think I scraped a few grooves in the marble floor.

"Now Night, calm down." Celestia leaned up against me. "You seem so disturbed by Luna changing like she is. It's just a part of growing up. And she seems intent on growing up with him." She spoke softly, so no one around would hear.

'I know, but I don't have to like it.' She frowned as I took off and landed in the rafters, watching over everyone in the room. Suddenly a commotion started in the middle of the room. My claws dug into the wooden rafters as Midnight knelt before Luna. He pulled out an obsidian box with diamonds around the lid. I heard him clearly, even across the room.

"Luna. Will you marry me." Luna looked between the ring and his face, tears in her eyes.

“Yes.” She knocked him onto the ground as she hugged him. “Yes!” She happily shouted.

The rafters turned icy under me as they stood once more and began dancing. The nobles all gave them room as they danced in a circle, Luna’s head leaned on his shoulder, growing warmer with every circle they completed. And with every circle I felt my little Luna slipping away. *That’s why I’m angry.* The ice thawed as I realized this. *I don’t want to lose her. But I can’t keep her forever.* I looked closely at Luna’s face. She was so happy, tears were in her eyes and a smile on her face. She had finally found love after waiting for so long.

I saw the same when I looked at Midnight’s face. He looked just as happy. He leaned his head over on top of Luna’s as they danced, and closed his eyes with a smile. *I can’t hide her away forever. You have my best wishes.* I flew out the nearest window and went to the forest to clear my head. My guards could handle it from this point on. I needed to clear my head, get some fresh air. Maybe kill something big.....really big. *Well there is the hydra that’s been causing problems near that small border town.* I adjusted my course slightly and headed to my new hunting grounds.

Rich Soil

I stood off to the side of the party, I couldn’t partake in this mess. I had worked long and hard for my position as a noble, farming and providing food for my fellow ponies. Over time I had stored away enough money to get a seat in the farming counsel, even though some didn’t agree with it. From there I worked my way up to being a noble. It was bad enough I had to share my noble status with stuckup unicorns and headstrong Pegasi. And now? Now a **Griffin** was marrying one of the Princesses! This was a reason to riot! Not party! Yet everypony else seemed content to dance away the problem at hand. It was bad enough she had a mutant bird as a captain of the guard. Now she was marrying one?

This is ridiculous. The princess would never marry such a distasteful species. Unless..... That was it, he must have been threatening the kingdom into marriage! All I had to do was expose this threat to the

public, then the princess would be free again. *You won't get away with this. I know what you're doing.* I smirked as I walked into the shadows. I had plans to make.

Night Wing

“KEEEAR!!” My shriek cut through the air as I dove at the third head of the hydra. The other two were currently tied in a knot and laying on the ground. The head bit at me as I flew past and I swerved to avoid the large teeth. Racing down its neck, just over the surface, I let down my claws.

“RAAAAAA!”

The hydra bellowed as its neck split open. Acidic green blood poured down onto the earth, sizzling as it mixed with the mud. As I turned around, the flesh began to close up. *I don't think so buddy.* “CAAAW!” I dove in and lit my claws with blue fire as they sunk into its neck. This fire didn't burn it, it froze the flesh.

“RAAAAAEEEEEEEEEEEE!!” It thrashed its necks as the one I was on became stiffer and stiffer. “REEEEeeeeee!!” The Head I was on gave one last cry before falling limp and silent. The only thing holding it up was the frozen neck. I quickly solved this by sending a pulse of magic through my feet and shattering the neck. The rock hard flesh fell onto the other two heads and crushed them. The muscles below me spasmed repeatedly before relaxing in death.

I tiredly lay down on top of the massive beast, taking a bite of the meat to regain some strength. The sun was just starting to rise above the horizon, and birds were starting to sing in the distance. *I should probably head back.* I looked down at the dead hydra beneath me, then in the direction of the castle. I lay down and relaxed as I took another bite from the flesh I was laying on.

Author's Notes:

So, Luna has found love, and some ponies don't like that. Can't please everyone I suppose. How was it?

Things are getting to the exciting point, I know there hasn't been much action in the past few chapters. We are getting there. Also, I realize my chapters have been short. I am trying to fix that. This one is a little longer, I'm working my way back up to 2k!

Mawage

Luna

“Ow!” I flinched as my handmaiden pulled a little too hard on my mane.

“Oh, I’m so sorry Luna!” She backed away with a frown on her face. “I’m just trying to get your mane perfect for your big day!” Her frown disappeared as a smile forced itself onto her lips. “Good news though!” I perked up. “I’m done with your mane!” I watched Lily gain a contemplating look behind me. She looked at me in the mirror. “This tail is awful, May I fix it for you?”

I didn’t like my tail being messed with, but... “Fine, if it must be done.” I frowned into the glass. “Just make it quick please.”

“Of course, I know how you are about your tail.” Lily began to work tirelessly on the long blue hair. I just sighed and smiled as I thought of the day ahead. Exactly one week ago Midnight had proposed to me. Today was the day we were getting married. And I couldn’t be happier.

Midnight

“Ow!” I flinched as my servant pulled my wing too hard.

“Sorry, that feather was being stubborn.” He yanked on another feather roughly. “That one too.” He smiled sheepishly.

“Oh crimson, be glad you are my friend. Or else I would crack your beak right now.” I huffed as I looked in the mirror. “So, how do I look?” Crimson Claw circled slowly around me.

“Well, I wouldn’t marry you.” He smirked at me. “But I think the reason why is obvious.”

“I could strangle you sometimes.” I laughed loudly.

“So, today is the day huh? The mighty Midnight is getting married!” He nudged my shoulder. “Just don’t forget about ole me okay?” A few tears formed in his eyes. He slowly walked up to me and hugged me tightly. “I can’t believe you’re finally growing up!” He sobbed into my shoulder. I hugged my older brother as I laughed.

“Look at this! Guards, get in here! The Crimson Claw is crying!” I called out jokingly. I patted my brother’s back as he cried on me. “You’re getting snot in my feathers you know.”

He quickly pulled off me as he sniffled. “Sorry.” He sniffed loud as he regained his composure. “I..I’m good now.” He wiped the tears off my shoulder with a towel. “Let’s finish you’re hair. You’ve always had a messy head. Compared to me anyways.” He smirked as I groaned.

Night Wing

‘No no no!’ I stalked through the main hall in the castle. ‘I want you **there** and **you** there!’ I glared as the two guards fumbled with their spears. I turned around as they assumed their positions. I saw the guards behind me had already become disorganized again. “CAAAAW!!” I shouted out in frustration. As the guards all stared at me, I grabbed them all in my magic and moved them where I wanted them. ‘**STAY**’ I glared at every one of them. They all stiffened as I walked by them toward the door.

I turned around when I reached the door and observed my work. I smiled as I saw the neat rows of guards along the walls. *Finally*. I looked to the rafters to see how Silver was doing. My smile grew bigger when I saw all the hidden Thestrals on the ceiling. My eyes met with Silver’s and we both nodded at each other. Then, the shadows grew dark in the rafters and they were no longer visible.

“I see you are doing well with managing guards!” A very old voice called from behind me. I turned to see Swirl walk in slowly. “Ack! Stupid marble flooring is hard on my hips.” He glared at the floor in disdain. “You would think the young ones could build things that considered old ponies.” I just laughed as Swirl fussed about the flooring of all things.

‘And how are you old friend?’ I smirked ‘emphasis on the old’ he moved his glare from the floor to me.

“Ah, you are just lucky I can still see well enough to read your wings!” He hobbled over to one of the cushions on the floor. Instead of pews or chairs, the ponies had long cushions. They were placed the same way pews would be placed, but they had no backs, and the ones in the back were on a slightly raised platform. “Much better.” He sighed as he sat on the soft seat. “At least they did one thing right.”

‘So, what have you been busy with these past few months?’ I asked Swirl. His health had slowly decreased over the months since our **incident**. Nevertheless he acted as though he was still young, going on adventures and exploring the world and magic.

“Oh, this and that. Had a very interesting time down south in the hive. Studied some changeling spells. Did you know they have spells to make short range portals?” Swirl had a familiar sparkle in his eyes.

‘Oh, I had a few hints about it.’ *Thank you MLP*. Swirl just shook his head.

“One day Night, I will figure out how you know the things you do.” He rubbed at his eyes tiredly. “But, that will be a later day. I did not do many exciting things on this trip. Besides visiting the hive of course. That and some ridiculous rumors of flying lizards.” He laughed as he stood up. “Honestly, the ridiculous things ponies conceive sometimes. Well, I will be off Night. I need to catch up on some sleep before the wedding.” He walked out the door while I stood there smiling like an idiot.

“You ok sir?” A guard asked me from the corner.

‘Yes yes, just thinking about things to come.’ I distractedly replied. *Here, there be dragons*. I chuckled to myself as I left the main hall.

We had increased the number of guards in the castle for the wedding. By a lot. As in, nobody was off duty that day. Off course, this being a royal wedding, **everyone** was coming. There were

nobles watching through the windows just on the practice day. Plus, many griffins were coming as well. Mainly the family of Midnight, as well as the griffin nobles. They complained about not having the marriage in their country, but then someone burned down the wedding building. They stopped complaining soon after. *I believe Queen Lytra is coming as well. Though I'm sure no one will see her.* The Queen had a way of hiding from everyone. Personally, I called hacks. I even had a hard time scrying her while she was in disguise.

As I walked out the front entrance, I could see the crowd pressing against the gates. Of course, most of those ponies would not get inside for the wedding. We had a list of specific ponies that were allowed entrance into the castle. Mainly nobles, with a few friends of ours. Stone Slab, Bullseye, Healing and Lavender, maybe Misty, and Celestia made sure Silver Anvil was coming. She was smitten with him. *Smitten? I must be getting effected by the archaic nature of this place. Next I'll be saying thee and thou.* No one actually said thee and thou, so I don't know why Luna said them in the show. Of course, what are the chances everything will be exactly the same?

I launched up into the air to do one last scan of the city before the wedding. *I hope everything goes well today.*

Rich Soil

I gasped for breath as I appeared in my mansion. Black smoke swirled around my hooves while I stepped forward and collapsed on the large bed I had. "Nothing. Absolutely nothing!" I jumped up and angrily threw my bed against the wall and smashed it with my magic. I looked down at my glowing black and purple hooves and smiled. "This dark magic stuff is amazing, now I know why unicorns are so stuck up. They feel **powerful**." I let out a dark chuckle. "And they say this stuff is bad for you. Psshh, just some crap the unicorns made up to keep us lower than them."

I snarled and crushed the bed frame into nothing dust. Then I took a deep breath and called for the maid. "Mint! Come clean my room! And order a new bed while you do so!" I walked to my office and I heard Mint trotting to my room. I needed something to help me dig up information on the marriage between Princess Luna and the

griffin, so I turned to an old friend who had many old artifacts. One was an ancient book that held magic all races could use. Magic that was banned and deemed too dangerous. *Obviously the ponies that have been corrupted by dark magic didn't realize what they were doing. This is easy to control.*

The paper covered walls of my office came into view when I opened the door. I slipped through the door and closed it quickly behind me. Papers cluttered the walls and chalk lines connected them all. The papers were different documents that included everything the ponies had done with the griffins. The desk chair creaked as I slumped in it and stared at the wall. As I sat there my new friend appeared beside me. A shadowy pony with glowing green eyes walked up behind me and whispered in my ear.

“Keep looking friend, there is something driving the Princess to do these things. You just need to look deeper.”

“Of course, your right. I shouldn’t give up.” Why would I give up? The answer was there’s somewhere. Why would my friend lie to me? “We just need to look deeper.”

“Perhaps a spell would help? Maybe they hid something in the papersssssss.” The shadow hissed into my ear.

“Yes, another spell should help us.” I pulled out the old book my old friend had given me. A shame I had to kill him. But my new friend said he would stop us if he found out what we were doing. It had to be done. Somehow I knew the shadow smiled behind me as I opened the book. “We will stop this. We **must**.” *I have this under control...*

Night Wing

Ponies poured into the main hall, all trying to get a good seat. Of course, the best seats were reserved for special guests. The very front rows were occupied by family and close friends. I took the liberty of marking Queens Lytra’s seat with her name. She gave me a glare for that.

The nobles had to settle for the rest of the seats, which were limited. We managed to get most of the less irritating nobles a seat, but just barely. The doors shut with a loud boom as the last ponies made their way in and a hush fell over the room. The pianist started playing a happy tune and two side doors opened on opposite sides of the stage. From the left emerged Midnight and his brother Crimson Claw. Crimson was a dark red griffin, and he proudly walked behind Midnight with his head held high. They stopped in the middle with Crimson just behind Midnight. Midnight was wearing a long white fur cape, with black satin lining the inside. *I have to be honest, I really want that cape.* He also wore an old looking iron chest piece.

Gasps filled the room as Luna walked from the right door. She wore a long beautiful dress. I had a small part in making it. The part around her body was black with glitter here and there. The black slowly faded into space itself as it trailed behind her. I donated a good few feathers to make the train of the dress. She wore an obsidian breastplate over the front of her dress to honor the griffin tradition of wearing a piece of armor for all formal ceremonies. *Oh god, I think I may cry.*

I was sitting in the front row beside Lytra. She gave me an annoyed look as I blew my beak beside her. “Would you be quiet? I’m trying to feast on love here.” She whispered at me. I just smiled at her.

‘You know you can ask me for a hug whenever you want.’

“Ugh.” She turned to watch the ceremony as I snickered. I glanced at the ceiling to check up on Silver. She nodded that everything was ok so far. Satisfied that nothing needed my attention, I focused back on the wedding.

“Do you take this mare to be you’re wife, in sickness and health, burden and joy, conflict and peace?” Celestia asked Midnight.

“I do.”

“And do you, Luna, take this griffin to be your husband, in sickness and health, burden and joy, conflict and peace?”

“I do.”

“Does anyone object?” Celestia looked over the crowd. After a moment of silence she continued. “I now pronounce you husband and wife. You may kiss the bride.” Ever seen a bird kiss a horse? It looks strange, but it’s probably easier with flexible beaks.

“Aaaaah yes. Such strong love. Those two love each other very much.” Lytra sighed beside me. “Unfortunately I must leave. My hive needs me, many things need to be done. I wish you good fortune Night.”

‘Goodbye Lytra. Have a safe trip back.’ As she walked away I turned to watch Luna throw the bouquet of flowers. As all the mares gathered in a group to catch it, a golden glow grabbed it and dragged it to the back. It stopped in front of Celestia as she grinned in Silver Anvil’s direction. He blushed as Celestia walked up to him with the flowers. I just shook my head. *Celestia, you dirty cheater.* I had a small smile on my face as Luna and Midnight kissed once more. *Im glad everything turned out well.*

Author's Notes:

Sorry this took so long, i just wasn’t sure how to end it. In the end I decided to end it here and save the death for another chapter.....I mean happiness! Yes, happiness not death.

Together

Author's Notes:

Oh, I forgot to before, time skip ahead! This is mainly just a small slice of life chapter. Tell me how it was! Comments feed me!

Nine Months Later

Night Wing

I walked down the dock beside Luna as she leaned against me for support. “Thank you Night. I’m sorry I’m being such a burden on you and Tia.”

‘Oh Luna, you will **never** be a burden.’ I chuckled as I helped her up the ramp and into the large ship. ‘Easy now.’ I helped her onto the deck of the ship and started walking us to the rooms.

“Oh, I know. I just feel useless and.....” A few tears started trailing down her face.

‘Oh Luna. It’s ok. Shhhh.’ I hugged her close as I opened the door to her room. It was simple, just a bed and a small vanity. I picked her up in my levitation, being careful to avoid her stomach, and laid her down gently on the large bed. ‘No one thinks you’re a burden. If anything I’m happier that I get to take more care of you.’ I lay down beside her and hugged her in my wings. ‘You’ll always be my little sister.’ I looked down at her swollen stomach. ‘And soon I’ll have a little niece or nephew to spoil.’ Luna smiled at me.

“Night, we are ready to set sail.” Silver Wing stuck her head in the door. “The others are already on the ship and ready to go.”

‘Wonderful, tell the captain to set sail whenever he is ready.’ Silver retreated from the room, and I heard her walk away quickly. I unwrapped myself from Luna and stood up. ‘I’ll be back to check on you soon. I’m just going to oversee the boat launch.’ I left Luna with

a smile on her face as she slowly rubbed her swollen stomach with a hoof. My face was split with a grin as I came onto the deck. The sun was high, with just a few clouds in the sky. A few birds circled high in the air, and pegasi were flying everywhere. The now huge docks outside Las Pegasus were busy as usual. Ships coming and going to Griffinstone, the capital of the griffin kingdom.

A few smaller ship were exploratory vessels, going out in search of new places, and maybe a few riches. I had rode along with one or two crews. We had found some interesting locations, one of which I asked they keep secret. I may have quietly bought the land with money from the royal treasury. Celestia had told me I was their brother, and technically 'Prince' Night Wing, so I had access to the treasury. I hadn't ever used it until then. I was planning on building a house there and gifting it to the sisters as a small vacation home.

I nodded to the captain and he yelled for the sails to be lowered. As the sails unfurled the ship slowly accelerated from the dock and we began to rock more in the waves. The bright blue equestrian sails shone in the sun, and the Equestrian flag waved in the breeze. The flag was dark blue with the sun on one side and the moon on the other.

I looked over to see Black Iron flying around the ship with Moon and Lotus. I nodded to them as I went back to check on Luna. When I entered the room I didn't see her on the bed. Worry started to creep in until I heard a familiar sound. A sigh escaped me as I entered the bathroom. I sat beside Luna as she emptied her stomach into the toilet.

The cliffs of the griffin empire loomed over our ship as we traveled down the coast. The port was in sight, busy as ever. Ships entered and left constantly, bringing food and supplies in and out. Now that griffins had started moving to Equestria the ships had started bringing meat across the sea. The unicorns helped enchant the crates so the food wouldn't rot. Pegasi and griffins worked together to manage weather over the cities, and a few ponies even helped griffins hunt. Some magical creatures had rare parts useful for many things. Like shinewings, the evil crystal butterflies. The wings were used for starting fires, and weak heat enchantments on some tools.

As our ship drew closer to port several large ships pulled alongside us to escort us in. "Night! Good to see you again! How's my sister!?" Crimson Claw yelled to me as he flew from one of the ships.

'She is as well as she can be.' I chuckled. 'She was busy vomiting a few hours ago, so she is quite exhausted.'

"Yes, our hens go through the same thing." He smiled at me as our ships entered to port. The other ships split off as we moved to dock. "How goes Equestria?"

'It goes well. We have had little crime, and most are happy about the marriage and results of such.' I frowned a little. 'We have had a few who are unhappy. But they haven't done anything yet.' Crimson frowned at that.

"Yes, we have had the same here. Most are happy or don't care. Some however....well, someone had to burn down the church." A smile split his face once more. "But enough of that! My brother is ecstatic about your and Luna's arrival. He wishes Celestia could have come as well, but understands someone needs to run the country."

'I offered to stay for Celestia. She got a good laugh out of it.' I smirked.

"Ha! A good guard captain you are Night. But I don't believe leadership of a country is for you or me."

'Your probably right.' Our ship rocked lightly as it stopped by the dock and the anchor was dropped. 'It seems we have arrived. See you at lunch?'

"Of course." Crimson took to the air and glided to the castle. I walked back into the ship to retrieve Luna. I would have used a portal, but I was nervous using strong magic around a pregnant mare. I may come back to life after having my neck blown apart, but I didn't think Luna would. *I hope she has a baby that can use magic. I'll enjoy teaching him to steal cookies using portals.* I entered Luna's room to find her laying on the bed with a sick look on her face.

‘How are you feeling Luna?’ I looked at her with pity as I stood beside the bed.

“Don’t start with me Night! You know I don’t feel good!” She snapped at me. I just rolled my eyes. “And don’t give me your pity!” *Ah, the joys of a pregnant female.*

I lifted her in my magic as we walked up to the deck. “What are you looking at?” Luna asked crossly to a random crew member as we walked through the hallway.

“N-nothing Princess!” The mare stuttered. I just rolled my eyes once again as Luna folded her hooves in an angry way.

“Exactly! Walk away!” The princess yelled as we walked further down the hall and the mare just stood there with a confused look on her face. Luna was like that most of the way to the castle. I put her down once we reached the deck because she said, and I quote, ‘Me carrying her made ponies think she was weak, and start plotting to overthrow her.’ It was a long walk from the docks.

“Watch were your going!” Luna yelled at a griffin three feet away from her.

‘I’m so sorry.’ I apologized to the poor guy as we walked away.

“Don’t tell him sorry! He almost tripped me!” I flinched as my ear was assaulted by her voice. Then the second half of the trip began, and her mood did a complete flip.

‘Shhh, it’s ok.’ I hugged Luna as she sobbed. Most of the griffins along the road had uncomfortable looks, while a few older ones knew what was going on.

“No it’s not Night! I’m such a horrible pony!” She sobbed into my shoulder. “I’m yelling at everyone for nothing! I don’t deserve to have you comforting me.” I just hugged her tighter as we approached the castle doors. *I almost feel bad for Midnight. Almost.*

“Luna!” Midnight met us at the main entrance. “How are y-“

“Don’t ‘Luna’ me!” Luna glared at him. “You did this to me!”

“Wha-“ Midnight has a confused look. Luna started tearing up once more.

“I’m so soooorry!!” Luna cried as she ran past Midnight.

“Uh..” The confused look on his face made me sigh.

‘She has been like this for the past month. It’s just hormones from her being pregnant.’ We started walking to the lunch room where Luna ran to. ‘Just be careful what you say, and don’t take anything she says to heart. She doesn’t mean anything bad, she just can’t control her emotions right now.’

“I see. Thank you for warning me. This is the first time I have had to experience this.” He looked down at the floor. “I apologize for not being there when she started acting like this. I have been busy trying to clear up everything so I can be with her when the baby is born, and after.”

‘I know, and we don’t blame you. If anything I blame politics.’ I rubbed my temples wing my wings. ‘Oh how I long for the time when I didn’t have paperwork to fill out for every. Single. Thing.’

“Haha, so do I.” He frowned at that. “And now I have the problem of finding a place to take Luna on vacation.”

‘Don’t worry. I have you covered there.’ I smirked. ‘Found an amazing spot a decent ways away from civilization. I bought it up and was planning on giving it to the sisters, and you of course. Consider it a wedding gift.’

“Thank you Night. How can I pay you back?”

‘By staying with Luna forever. And being a good husband and father. That’s all I ask of you.’ Midnight stopped and hugged me.

“I will Night. I promise.” I hugged him back for a second before he pulled back. “Now let us go eat lunch. I already have your rooms prepared for you all.

The Beginning

Author's Notes:

Just a note, to clear up any confusion. The pony Rich Soil keeps seeing doesn't exist. He is just seeing things as he falls deeper into insanity.

Two Months Later

Night Wing

'Just hold on Luna!' I raced down the hallway with Luna in my magic. 'We're almost there!' I burst through a door and into a large empty room. Celestia was waiting there with a large stack of towels.

"OOOOOOHHH!" Luna yelled out as I set her on the bed. Doctor Healing Touch barged in behind me along with Nurse Lavender. I had asked for them specifically to be there for the birth.

"How far apart are the contractions exactly?" Healing asked calmly.

'About two minutes apart.' I answered as I held Luna's hoof.

"Aaaah! It hurts!" Luna clinched down hard on my claw. *Yep! I can tell!* I thought I heard a few cracks in my poor claw.

"I'm here! How far along is she!?" Midnight rushed in and shut the door.

"She is very close." Healing turned to Lavender. "Get the towels ready Lavender, I'm going to apply a small numbing spell to our friend here." Lavender took the towels from Celestia's grasp as Healing leaned over Luna. His horn began to glow as he touched it to Luna's stomach. "I am applying a simple numbing spell your highness, as well as checking the health of your foal." After a moment of standing there he pulled back. I could see Luna's muscles relax slightly as she sighed in relief. "Good news, your foal is perfectly healthy. In fact she should be born any moment now!"

“She!? We’re having a girl!?” Midnight asked excitedly. Suddenly Luna tensed up again, and Midnight was picked up from the ground by his neck.

“You did this to me!” Luna screamed as she pushed hard.

“Lavender! Come help me, it’s coming now!” Healing and Lavender ran over to Luna’s back end while Celestia tried to pry Midnight out of Luna’s magic.

“Aaaaaah!” Luna yelled loudly. I, having no interest in watching child birth, moved over to yank Midnight from the air. I flicked Luna’s horn with my talon and he dropped like a rock. Then I received a punch in the beak. My wing rubbed my now cracked beak as I sat on the floor, wondering how I got there. “AAAAAAH!” Luna screamed one final time, then her whole body relaxed as she panted loudly.

“Whaaaaaaaaaaaa.” A soft cry filled the room and Lavender carried something over to Luna. She was looking at it with amazement. Luna reached out to grab the small bundle, and hugged it to her chest.

“She’s beautiful.” Luna whispered. I peaked over Luna to see into the blankets, dragging a half conscious Midnight with me. When Midnight saw his child he snapped fully awake. In the blankets was a beautiful black hippogriff. The front half was covered in black feathers with dark blue tips. The back half had dark blue hair, and dark blue tail with a single black stripe in it. Luna wiped a little blood from the child’s beak as tears filled her eyes.

“What are we going to name her?” Midnight hugged Luna tightly as they stared intently at the newborn. Luna’s eyes sparkled as she spoke a simple name. Yet a name that would be remembered for centuries.

“Sapphire Tip.”

One Week Later

Rich Soil

I stood outside the window on Princess Luna's balcony. I watched as the beautiful Princess slept, Her beauty only ruined by that wretched griffin prince. And the one other body that lay between them. The horrible spawn of Princess Luna's unwanted marriage. I turned to my best friend, who appeared beside me suddenly. "What to do. What to do." I shook my head slowly. "What do you think Friend?" He turned to look at me, his dead eyes boring into mine.

"The anssswer is obviousss. Remove what bindsssss them, and they will fall apart." My friend whispered, and yet I heard every echoing word clearly in my head.

"Of course. It's so simple. Thank you my friend, our work is almost complete." I looked through the window at the small lump between the two parents. "I shall free you Princess." No emotion was present on my face as I charged my horn and began to form a large black spike in front of me. Then, when it was done being created.....I launched it.

Midnight Glory

My feathers tingled. I rolled slightly trying to fix them. I frowned as they continued to tingle. *Why.....tingling.* My sleepy mind forced open my eyes as I looked around the room. *Nothing.* I checked on the baby before I relaxed for a moment and my eyes closed once more. *Still tingling.* My eyes looked toward the balcony, thinking maybe the door had blown open.

CRASH! Time slowed as something flew through the air toward the bed. **toward my child.** I didn't know what it was in my sleepy state. I just knew it was dangerous, and was heading at my child. With a heave I threw myself in front of the object.

Night Wing

"AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!!!" I jerked up as a scream echoed through the castle. I kicked the covers off my bed and kicked open my door.

“KKKEEEEEEEAAR!!” I screeched at the various guards in the hall. ‘With me!’ They were all already moving, having heard the scream as well. We rushed through the castle until we reached Luna’s mahogany door. I kicked it open without a second thought, and froze up at what I saw. Luna was sobbing on the bed as she held Sapphire protectively to her chest. The bed was covered in blood, and she was leaning over a form I recognized all too clearly. I took one glance at the broken window and connected the dots. The stone floor around my feet shattered as it froze instantly.

“KEEEEEAAARR!” I shattered what remained of the window in a shower of sparkling glass. It fell to the ground, tinkling in the night as I soared through the air. I circled the castle twice before seeing a form running off into the forest. AAAAAHHH!! I screamed in rage internally, as I dropped like a rock from the sky. Wind whistled by me and my eyes narrowed as I drew closer to my prey. Time slowed when my feet connected to their back.

We both hit the dirt and rolled. I was instantly back on my feet, and though I didn’t have my blades on I was far from defenseless. I swung a wing out and threw several feathers at the pony, my magic hardening them into small blades. Three of the five connected with their side as they stood. A dark, distorted voice spoke from under their hood.

“Well, well, well. If it isssn’t the princessses little pet. Come to play have you?” The feathers were pushed from his skin by a black aura. “Hahaha, a shame this will be over quickly. I will enjoy removing yet another impurity from the princesses lives.” Suddenly he stopped what he was doing and turned his head to the right. “What?” He fell silent again. “What do you mean friend?” I cocked my head in confusion. *What is he going on about?* I growled in my head.

“CAAAAW!” My voice cut through the night. ‘Surrender now, and I may make your death less-’ I didn’t get to finish as I was slammed into a tree.

“Shhh, shh, shh. Don’t interrupt me while I’m talking to my friend.” The pony looked at the ground in thought. “Yes, yes my friend. That will work wonderfully.” The crazy pony looked at me with a large grin on his face. “We will turn him against the princesses, and

let them wipe him from existence.” As he approached me his aura dissipated and I fell to the ground in a daze. “Don’t worry poor little bird. This will only be excruciating.” His grin seemed to grow even more as his horn touched my head. It seemed to absorb the light around it as he cast something on me. Then, it was over. He backed away from me cackling like an idiot. “Rise. RISE, my minion. Go, and make the princesses realize that you’re vermin were not meant to be!”

I just sat there staring. *Dear god. He’s insane!* “Well!?” He yelled at me. “Shoo! Go do my bidding! Or are you too stupid to understand?” My talon wrapped around his throat. Then he vanished in a dark cloud of smoke. My claw collapsed on the empty air.

Luna cried for three days straight. Celestia had to take care of Sapphire, as Luna was too distraught to do anything. I finally had enough on the fourth day. I had to do something. “Chirp?” I quietly asked through her door. She hadn’t left her bed the whole time. We had to pry Midnight’s body from her grasp. We had him preserved until the burial. “Chirp?” This time a bit louder. I heard the sniffling die down slightly before the door creaked open. I quickly entered and shut it behind me. I slowly walked up to Luna and sat beside her on the bed. We had lifted her off the bed to change the sheets, but as soon as they were changed she ran back and buried herself in them. She was in that same position from that day. She hadn’t eaten or drank anything and, judging by the smell, she hadn’t bathed either. She looked horrible.

‘Luna. You need to come out.’ I rubbed her shoulder soothingly. ‘Please. You need to eat and drink, and your daughter needs you. Midnight’s family are here, they want to see you. Celestia wants to see you, I want to see you.’ I nuzzled her gently. She didn’t respond, and I sighed. ‘Maybe later then. Do you mind if I sit with you?’

“Leave me alone Night.”

‘Not until you come out Luna.’ I firmly wrote. Luna sighed and she sank further into her bed.

“If I promise to come out in the morning will you leave. I just want

one more night alone.” I could hear the pain in her voice. I looked out at the darkening sky and hesitated.

‘If you promise. And I will make sure you keep that promise.’ I leaned over her to look into her eyes.

“I promise Night. Now please, leave me alone for one more night.” She turned her eyes away from me and I stood from the bed. I quietly made my way out the door and shut it behind me. I never even noticed the books scattered around her bed.

I was dreaming, that much I could tell. The second thing I noticed was fear. Overwhelming fear consumed me. I don't know why, but I turned around and looked at the moon in my dream. There, there was the source of my fear. A baleful blue eye had replaced the moon and was staring blankly at me. As it met my eyes it suddenly vanished, and then the dream was over. I slept fitfully the rest of the night, have nightmares about all seeing eyes in the sky. And somehow, I knew who that eye belonged to. Luna.

With a gasp I shot up from my bed. Only, I wasn't in my bed. I was in a cave. A bright light from behind me made me turn around quickly. There stood the tree of harmony, silent in its vigil. A glow emanated from its trunk that soon morphed into a familiar shape. A shape I hadn't seen in forever. Before me stood the human woman that could only be Harmony. “Hello Night Wing, it's nice to see you again. I only wish it could be under better circumstances.”

‘And where were you?’ I practically growled. All the stuff that has happened recently, and she decides to speak up now?

“I can't interfere with the way things happen Night. That's why I have you.” She frowned a little. “Unfortunately, some things must remain the same. Things concerning the future of a certain pair of sisters.”

‘What are you talking about?’

“Come now Night, you are **dreaming**. You don't have to write on your wings here.”

"I-I asked what you were talking about." I stuttered as I heard a voice I had forgotten.

"You should know quite well my dear Night." She pointed to the sky, and I followed her finger. Above us was the large Equestrian moon. And on it was the Mare in the Moon.

"No. I-how could I forget that!?" I started panicking. Luna, alone on the moon, for **one thousand years!**? "I can change it! I have to!" My gaze snapped down to Harmony against my will.

"You will do no such thing." I tried to speak in return, but my mouth wouldn't move. Harmony started pacing "If you do that, then think of what that will mean for the future. Villains that were defeated won't be, disasters that were stopped will not be stopped. And a certain purple princess and her friends won't exist." She spun around to face me. "While it is true the show you watched is not the exact way things will really happen in this world, that moment, the banishment of Luna, is pivotal in the development of this world."

"Forget your development! I won't let my family suffer anymore!" I managed to force out. Harmony just hung her head sadly.

"Then I'm afraid I must stop you. I apologize for this, I truly do." Suddenly white tendrils shot from the crystal tree behind her. They impacted my head, and all I knew was darkness.

I woke with a loud yawn, not remembering having any dreams through the night. I heard a loud commotion outside, and turned to my door as it creaked open. I turned to see my fellow Lunar Guard members watching me. They all looked sad, and the normally cheery, fun loving Lotus spoke in a sad voice. "We tried to stop her night. We really did." I jumped up and tossed open my balcony doors. Outside Luna stood on a stage with a manic look on her face. She held the assassin in the air on her right side, and a large battle axe on her left.

"Today, I have my vengeance!" Luna swung the axe down, and with a solid thunk the whole crowd started screaming.

Unrest

The crowd screamed as Celestia stared at the ax buried in her shield. Even Celestia seemed surprised at how close the ax was to her face. It had stopped only a few inches away, with most of one side being completely inside the shield. "Luna! Stop this madness at once!" Celestia dropped her shield as the crowd started to calm down. The battle ax hit the wood stage and sunk in the boards with a smooth SHING.

"Move sister. This cur took everything from me! Now step aside while I take his life." Luna picked up her ax once more.

"You're scaring ponies, Luna!" The crowd had once more began screaming. I hovered above Luna, waiting to see if I needed to intervene. "What are you doing?! Having a public execution like this! Have you gone mad?!" Celestia had to raise a shield once more as Luna swung the ax at her.

"He needs to be punished! Would you rather I let him go free!?" Luna pulled back her ax and hit the shield around Celestia and the assassin again. "I thought he had escaped once! I had to search through every dream in the city to find him, and I won't let him escape this time!" I flinched back at that, memories of the nightmares from the previous night coming back to me. The crowd also reacted as they heard this, some running and locking themselves in nearby buildings.

Celestia's shield pulsed as it blocked another swing of the ax. *Ok, that's enough of the ax swinging.* I swooped down and grabbed the ax in my talons. I felt a mild resistance as I pulled it away, but I seemed to have surprised Luna enough to make her release it. I grabbed it in my telekinesis as I landed beside Celestia. I glanced at the assassin for a moment and I clenched my claws in anger. Shaking my head, I turned back to Luna.

'Luna, he didn't take everything from you. You still have your daughter to take care of.' I glanced at Celestia's slightly cracked shield. 'You're acting irrationally. Now come back into the castle,

and I will take care of this pony.’ I glared at the dazed pony being held by a blue aura. ‘Trust me. He won’t escape this time.’ Luna looked unsure for a moment before huffing.

“Very well. But if I find out he escaped, I will hold **you** responsible **Captain** Night Wing.” Luna’s face turned serious as she stalked in the entrance to the castle. *Ouch. I’ve gone from brother, to Captain.* My head shook in disappointment as the assassin hit the ground with a thud. Apparently Luna didn’t want to hold him anymore. The now unconscious pony floated up in my magic and I carried him into the castle. Celestia fell in step beside me.

‘Are you ok Celestia?’ My eyes checked her for any wounds.

“I’m fine. Physically anyways. I’m worried about Luna though. I understand her anger, but she has to control it better than this. I’m afraid she will lose control and hurt someone.” We heard a quiet crying as we approached a meeting room. “It seems Luna has met up with Midnight’s family. You take this cretin to the prison while I comfort them.” Celestia split off from my path and entered the side room. I saw Luna hugging some of Midnight’s family as they cried together. Even Sapphire seemed to be effected by the mood. Her normally happy expression was gone as she rested in her crib.

The empty halls echoed the clicking of my claws on the marble flooring, and soon another set joined mine. I looked to the side as Crimson Claw walked with me. Neither of us said anything as we descended into the currently empty prison. The few torches provided little light under the castle, and I had to fight from slipping on the damp stone stairs. The first few cells got passed up as we went further in. When we had reached the last cell I casually tossed him in and slammed the door. Crimson and I both stood there for awhile and just stared at the pony laying in the floor.

“He was young.” Crimson stated quietly. It wasn’t sad or angry. Just a statement. “I know you didn’t want this to happen Night. And I know the same of Celestia and Luna.” He turned to look at me as a groan came from the cell. “But it happened. My brother is dead and now I am king. For the safety of my people, I am cutting off the major trades. Griffins will still be allowed to come and go, but I don’t want many in Equestria right now.” He looked back into the

cell as the pony stood up slowly. “I can’t risk anymore being killed. Maybe in a few years, we can talk about reaffirming our alliance and trades. But not right now.” Crimson reaches into the cell and grabbed the prisoner’s neck with his claw. He had a conflicted look in his eyes as the pony choked, before he pulled the pony into the bars with a CLANG. The pony fell back in an unconscious heap. “He’s yours to punish.” Crimson turned and walked away while I just stared at the pony, thinking deeply.

“Chirp.” I grabbed Crimson’s attention before he left. ‘How were you so sure none of us had any ill will toward Midnight? I know I acted pretty angry around him when he first started dating Luna.’ Crimson simply looked at me for a moment before answering.

“You’re not the only one with bugs planted everywhere. Though, if you didn’t realize that, then yours aren’t working.” Crimson turned back around and left the room. I thought of the implications of what he said, and my talons curled up in anger. *Lytra should have known about this. Her job was to sneak around and find these kinds of things.* It seemed I had a Queen to hunt down.

Author's Notes:

This was a short chapter, just to help set the stage for future events. Sorry for how short it is, but my brain isn’t working and this is the best I could write at the moment.

Also, [This story has a Discord now!](#)

The Hive

“So...hot....” Lunar Lotus trudged through the sand beside me. I simply rolled my eyes at her.

‘You should have thought of that **before** you said you needed more exciting adventures.’ My gaze roamed over the desert around us. ‘Here is your adventure. Now quit complaining. The hive should be just over this hill.’

“Uhg fine.” Lotus matched my pace up the steep sand dune. “Who would even live out here? Probably not a fruit tree for miles.” She muttered. Once more I rolled my eyes.

‘Remind me not to take you on anymore adventures.’ I chuckled as she indignantly glared at me.

“The next adventure probably won’t be in a desert!” Fuming, she crossed over the hill ahead of me. “Besides, shouldn’t we have found them....by....now....” Her voice trailed off. I smirked as I walked up over the hill. I thought having knowledge of the show and fan fictions would prepare me for what a hive looked like. I was wrong.

Three huge black spires peirced the heavens, arranged in a triangle. Dark clouds circled the towers and struck them with lightning randomly. They where connected by three bridges about half way up, with a large room suspended from the bridges. The room was shaped like a large upside down teardrop. The towers looked like the chitin covering the changelings themselves, shiny and dark colored. As we approached the towers a large swarm of changelings surrounded us.

“What is your purpose here!?” One yelled at us as it landed.

‘I am Night Wing, Captain of the Lunar Guard! I have come to speak with Queen Lytra.’ My gaze didn’t falter at the large swarm around me. Lotus looked a little nervous but she hid it well. Not that it mattered with emotion eating bug ponies around us, but it’s the

thought that counts.

“You must submit to a magic scan first.” The changeling narrowed his eyes at us. “If not, turn and leave now.”

‘Scan away.’ We stood still as he lit his horn with a snort. A thin line of purple passed over me and Lotus before he looked up with surprise.

“My apologies, you are free to enter. We have had to start scanning any who wish to enter due to...” He stopped himself with a nervous look. “It’s not my place to say. Please, follow me to the throne room.” He took off quickly, heading for the large room under the bridges, with Lotus and I following closely. We passed hordes of changelings on the way up. There had to be millions, and that was only what we saw on the way up.

As we passed between the spires a tingling sensation passed over us. I look to the changeling we were following with a questioning look. “That sensation you just felt was a large scale scanning field, among a few other things. I honestly don’t know everything the spires can do, only the Queen does.” I flinched as lightning struck a spire. *Well, she has the awesome evil lair design done perfectly.* “It helps us keep out intruders, but it isn’t as powerful as a more focused scan like what I did to you two.”

“Nerd!” A changeling yelled out as it flew by. Our changeling Just grumbled with a small green blush.

“Just go in there. The Queen is already aware of your presence.” The drone pointed at a large opening in the side of the hanging throne room.

‘Thank you.’ We passed through the entrance into the dark interior. There were no guards visible, just a large black throne at the end of the narrow room we had entered. On the throne sat Lytra, lazily gazing at us as we approached.

“So! You have finally decided to visit Night.” Lytra smirked as she looked around. “What do you think of my home?”

‘As lovely as your home is, I’m not here for pleasure. Strictly business.’ I glared at her. ‘More specifically, the business of Midnight’s death.’ Lytra stopped smirking at that, and a sad expression took its place.

“Yes, I had heard about that. How is Luna handling it?”

‘Not well. But I’m hear to talk about what you had to do with it. Or, more specifically, what you **didn’t** have to do with it.’ My glare increased.

“What are you talking about?” Lytra was glaring now.

‘Your job was to keep an eye out for things like this. To use your changelings to keep an eye on things out of the public!’ Lotus shuffled her feet nervously as Lytra and I glared at eachother. ‘And yet, somehow, the assassination plans of a single earth pony managed to succeed.’ Lytra said nothing. Then she stopped glaring and collapsed on her seat.

“Yes. As much as I hate to admit it, you are correct. Things are not well here. In fact they are very bad. I had to withdraw most of my spies. I thought I could deal with our problems here and get them back without you noticing.” She sighed loudly. “I made a mistake. I’m sorry for that, but my hive comes first.” She tilted her head for a moment and stared into empty air. Then she focused back on me.

‘So you left us. Without warning or anything. Even a letter would have been nice! Maybe a :Hey! I’m abandoning you!’ The air grew cold around me. ‘But instead you ju-‘ Lytra held up a hoof to stop me. ‘Excuse me? Did you just hu-‘

“Be silent!” Lytra tilted her head and once again stared at the air. Then she snapped back to me. “You may continue.” I saw a hint of nervousness in her gaze before it disappeared and was replaced by an icy calm.

‘What...Why do you keep stopping like that?’

“My children were telling me about something on the border. It’s nothing important.” Lytra motioned for me to continue. “Please,

continue.” I just stared at her with incredulity.

‘What was so important that you had to remove your spies?’ I sighed. ‘That’s what I want to know. I want to know you had a good reason.’ Suddenly an explosion rocked the castle. Lytra just sat there calmly.

“That would be the reason.” We looked outside the entrance to see a large purple shield flare to life as an explosion spread out over it. Then a small canister flew right past my head and imbedded itself into the head of Lytra’s throne. “A rival hive has declared war against us.” She states calmly as purple magic pulled the canister from her throne. Lytra broke the chitin like container in half with a pulse of magic, pulling out a small piece of paper. She glanced at it before floating it over to me. All it said was ‘One Day.’

“One day until what?” Lotus questioned.

“Until the Queen of the rival hive arrives. Once she is here the battle will begin in earnest. No more hiding, or bombardments like the one you just witnessed.” Lytra stood from her throne and walked to the entrance of the throne room. “You were lucky to have me so near to your kingdom Night. Most queens are like me, preferring to keep our food alive and healthy. We get a constant supply of food when we don’t raze kingdoms and murder ponies.” Her eyes locked onto mine. “Some queens however...” another explosion lit up the shield. “The rival queen is powerful. Much more than I. This castle has been handed down from Queen to Queen over thousands and thousands of years. I don’t know the full power of it’s weapons as I have never had to use them. And yet, I fear that even with our castles defenses we will lose.”

Lytra walked back to sit on her throne. ‘We could help you. Simply ask and I can get guards here in one day.’ I offered.

“Ha! You do not comprehend what I speak of dear Night. This Queen is feared by many hives. She has millions of soldiers under her command. And those are only the ones specifically trained in combat. Her name will not carry much weight for you, but it is feared among the Hives. Chrysalis, destroyer of hives, approaches.” Yet again, an explosion rocked the castle. I flinched at both the

explosion and the name.

‘And there is nothing we can do to help?’ I approached her throne. ‘You know I will do my best to defend your people. You may have made a mistake but I will still help you.’

“There is nothing for me to do but wait. Wait and hope we win. Your pony guards will do nothing but incur her wrath upon you as well.” She paused for a second. “Although....”

‘What is it Lytra?’

“Perhaps...you can assist me with something. It will be risky though.” She looked me in the eye.

‘A little risk never hurt anyone.’ I blinked. ‘Well, not anyone immortal like myself anyways.’ Lytra smirked at that.

“Don’t get over confident Night. Perhaps you can stay here during the siege. In case things don’t go well, I would like a little assurance for a few things.” She frowned. “It would be appreciated if you did.”

‘Of course Lytra.’ I turned to Lotus. ‘Lotus, tell Celestia and Luna I am going to stay here with Lytra for a day or so. Don’t tell them why, I have a feeling Lytra doesn’t want them knowing.’ Lytra nodded her thanks to me. Lotus saluted to me and flew out of the room.

“Couldn’t you have opened a portal for her?” Lytra asked.

‘I was going to. She didn’t wait long enough.’ A smile worked its way onto my face. ‘Now, what do you need me to do?’

Author's Notes:

[Discord Server](#)

How was this chapter? It’s a little short I know, but I haven’t been in the writing mood the last few days. I’m trying to keep the updates coming

though!

Inevitable

Lytra and I stood in the throne room entrance side by side. I had notified Luna and Celestia of my stay in the hive. Celestia had expressed slight concern, but accepted it. Luna had just fed Sapphire and nodded to me as I talked to her. I had contacted them with a slightly more advanced version of scrying. I scried through a piece of blue steel, or one of my feathers they had, and they could see and talk to me. It wasn't much harder than normal scrying, at least not to me. Luna had calmed down a lot in the past few days. I was hoping she was accepting Midnight's death. Of course, when I told them about the imminent attack they were more than a little concerned. I managed to make them stop worrying about me, mainly by stressing the point that I couldn't die.

As Celestia raised the sun over the horizon, a horn rang out. The sound was loud and long, and Lytra sighed as it faded away. "And so it begins." Almost immediately the surrounding desert seemed to shift. It looked as though black dust was rising from the sand and forming a massive wall. As it drew closer I realized it was a massive swarm of changelings.

'Oh. My. Gosh.' An explosion slammed into our shield but it held strong. As the purple faded I could see the front of the swarm starting to spin clockwise. It extended out into a point, like a sideways tornado. Two more explosions impacted our shield before the funnel of changelings had almost reached us. 'So, what's the plan?' I asked worriedly. They were almost at the shield.

A large horn appeared at Lytra's side in a flash of light. She raised it to her lips and blew out a long sorrowful note. With a low buzzing thousands of changelings emerged from Lytra's hive. They stopped just before crossing the shield, waiting for a signal. "Remember those castle defenses I mentioned?" Lytra almost seemed to smirk. Her horn lit and the walls of the throne room turned transparent. Then a low thrumming emanated from the castle spires. My feathers raised up as the air filled with static, and I smelled small amounts of ozone. The tips of the spires began to glow and, just as the first

enemy touched the shield, an arc of lightning raced from the closest spire and impacted them. It chained out to at least twenty of the other Changelings. Then the main force hit the shield.

“Stay your ground!” Lytra called out as the shield constantly flashed purple. Lytra’s unmoving forces sat inches away from the enemy as the shield took the beating. The castle’s spires were shooting out constant streams of lightning, almost like Tesla coils.

‘If you told me you had a giant Tesla Coil for a castle, I would have come sooner.’ I winced a little as I watched a group of ten changelings explode. The electricity arcing from the spires, to the changelings, and then to the ground made quite a light show.

“I don’t know what a Tesla Coil is, but even I didn’t know about this. This castle is older than anyone can remember, as are most of the Changeling hives.” She smiled. “Even my mother didn’t know the power this place has.” An enraged shriek pierced through the air as a particularly large spot of the shield flashed purple. The castle was now completely surrounded by a black swarm and lightning was arcing in all directions.

‘Will the shield hold?’ My eyes locked onto the brightest spot on the shield. I thought I saw a little green slip through for a second.

“Not long.” Lytra was looking at the same spot. Another shriek echoed through the desert. “Oh dear, we seem to have made her angry. I do hope she doesn’t pop a blood vessel and bleed out.” A smile grew on her face. “Ready yourselves!” The lines of changelings below us surrounded the weak spot on the shield. Green was leaking through it now, overtaking the purple. Slowly but surely a hole was forced open and a large angry Queen barged in. Lytra’s changelings moved to intercept her, but they were shot back by a blast of magic.

“HAHAHAHAHA!” Chrysalis laughed insanely as she charged up her horn and shot it toward one of the spires. A large beam of green met with a small shield of purple as Lytra’s horn glowed. Then Lytra disappeared in a flash. She reappeared in front of Chrysalis, wearing a snarl of rage.

“Turn away from here Chrysalis! There is no point to this battle!” Chrysalis just laughed in return to the attempted diplomacy.

“Of course there is! My swarm is hungry, and you have a massive store of love here in your hive! So I shall destroy you and your forces and take—” Chrysalis was interrupted by a beam of purple.

“Well, I tried! And who monologues during a battle?” Lytra laughed loudly as I swooped down from the throne room. “I’ll take the big brat, if you will deal with the smaller ones.” She zipped off toward where Chrysalis landed and disappeared into the dust cloud. Large green and purple energy balls started shooting out of said cloud soon after. I turned to the shield just as it gave way. The top opened up and the opening spread down the sides. The swarm outside poured over the lip like a wave of water, and they immediately started firing green energy at us. The shadow hive met them with blasts of purple energy and sharp black swords. I shot up to meet the wave head on as a black dome of magic formed in front of me. Crashing through the enemies’ frontline, I shattered my shield and shot the shards in every direction. Icicles formed on the nearby changelings and they fell from the sky as their wings froze. My feathers started leaking magic as I spun and threw them out in random directions. I was rewarded with many cries of pain as the feathers detonated in the air. A changeling flew at me with his horn lowered to spear me. I opened one portal in front of him, and another above the sharp spires of the castle. He didn’t even notice as he flew through the portal and speared himself on the spire. I flinched as lightning arced through a few changelings near me.

A small group of changelings attempted to surround me, only to have themselves surrounded by a shield and crushed together. It sounded like I cracked a bunch of eggs as the shield was filled with a clear fluid I assumed was changeling blood. I dropped the shield and watched as the bodies impacted an angry green queen far below me. She flinched and then looked up to meet my gaze. My eyes met hers, and her mouth opened wide as if she yelled something. I couldn’t hear it due to all the buzzing wings around me, but I smiled and waved anyways. That seemed to make her angry, as she shot a beam of magic at me. I rolled my eyes as I opened a portal in front of me and another one behind her. She

smacked into the castle wall as her own magic hit her. Looking over at our changelings, I could see we weren't doing well. We were easily outnumbered ten to one. The only reason we were still alive was due to the now gone shield, and the lightning from the spires.

A large CRACK made me snap my head to the castle. Chrysalis stood on the ground, shooting energy into one of the spires. It let out loud cracks and groans as it slowly fell, the fractures letting out many arcs of lightning. Friend and foe were both fried as the tower slowly fell toward a lone figure on the ground. *NO!* The air raced by me as my wings snapped shut and I angled myself toward Lytra. She was lying still on the ground, the large spire falling towards her slowly. Time seemed to slow as the spire grew close and I realized something. I couldn't make it and save both of us. But I didn't need to. I hurtled toward Lytra as crazed laughter echoed on the wind. I impacted Lytras side just as the tower crashed down. She was flung away from the crash, but I had to take said tower straight to the face.

Chrysalis

I smiled widely as I saw the bird get crushed. *Wonderful. One less problem for me to deal with.* After a moment of searching, I found the doomed Queen lying not far from the wreckage. "Isn't this wonderful?" I asked her as my hooves touched the ground. My front leg lifted and came down on her back one with a crunch.

"AAAH!" The weakling cried out in pain as her chitin was crushed to nothing.

"This is pitiful really. The ease with which I destroyed your whole army. Your castle lay in ruins, and you are broken before me." I snorted. "I expected at least a small challenge, but this?" I grinned as I leaned in to look her in the eye. "This is just one name in the long list of Kingdoms I've conquered. Nothing special. Worthless really." I lifted my leg and brought it down on her front one. Another crunch rang out as she screamed. "You should thank me. I'll put the love you have stored to good use." I stepped back and prepared to end her with a simple blast of magic, but something slammed into my back.

Night Wing

I glared at Chrysalis as snow and ice whirled around me. A trail of frost hung in the air behind her as she flew into the wall of the hive. I glanced down at Lytra before continuing after Chrysalis. I levitated her back to me and tossed her into the sky before shooting an icicle through the leg she was stomping on Lytra with.

“GAAAH!” Chrysalis hollered as she fell back down. Then several of her changeling grabbed her and took her away into the swarm. I tried to locate her, but I couldn’t see her through all the moving changelings. I huffed and turned back to where Lytra lay bleeding out.

“Did you get her?” Lytra struggled to talk as I lay beside her.

‘She is running for her life.’ I smiled sadly.

“Hah! Go-COUGH-Good. We fought valiantly. I am proud to have such a honorable death.” She shook as she was wracked with coughing. “Oh Night, It was fun while it lasted. But this was inevitable. All things die eventually, except maybe you.” Lytra smiled as her eyes slowly faded. “I have one last favor to ask of you Night. My dying wish.” With a flash of light, a purple stone appeared next to Lytra. It was about half the size of her head. “Take my child. Raise it somewhere safe. It will know when to hatch, and when it does I want you to cherish it for me. Give it what I won’t be able to.” Lytra floated the egg to me and I took it under my wing. “You are a good friend Night. There is no other I would rather die beside.”

The purple in her eyes faded completely to gray as her horn glowed one last time, and the only thing I heard was the swarm above continuing to buzz. Then a massive explosion reverberated through the castle and it collapsed, sending a fountain of pink into the sky. The pink fluid fell down and hit the ground all around the castle. It stayed for a few seconds before fading into nothing. A loud scream of rage was heard over the buzzing and I turned back to Lytra to see a final smile on her face. I shook my head and smiled. *It seems you got the last laugh Lytra. I shouldn’t have expected anything else. I*

opened up a portal and stepped through, saying goodbye one last time.

Author's Notes:

https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=IXdbCU3Mt_c

I took inspiration for my swarm battle from this movie. Such a good movie. How was this chapter? I live on comments, sate my appetite.

[Discord Server](#)

Ruff Diamonds

One Year Later

Third Person

Two large bipedal dogs stood in a long rock tunnel. They leaned slightly on the walls as their eyes drooped. All night they had been standing there, and the sun was coming up soon. Then they could finally get some rest back in the den. Their heavy metal spears stood tall and were covered in lightly glowing gems. They provided just enough light for the dogs to see with. Thick metal armor covered large arms and legs built for digging. Fangs hung from their mouths and large helmets protected their heads. Two pairs of ears pricked up as they detected a small noise. Then they relaxed after hearing nothing for a few seconds.

A thick mist slowly spread through the tunnel. The dogs barely noticed, as their fur coats protected them from the cold air. It crawled down from the opening they were guarding and slunk down into the dens of the dogs, piercing every room and crevice in the tunnel system. Then the gems in their staffs stopped glowing. They jumped up and started shuffling around in the dark, trying to see what happened to their spears. Then, with two loud CRACKS, everything was silent.

All throughout the tunnels guards were falling silently, clearing a path to several side caverns. Except for one trail of fog that went directly into the main cavern. The main cavern of the den was massive. Large torches covered the walls and lit the giant pillars reaching to the stone ceiling one hundred feet above. Gems were imbedded in the pillars and they lit the roof with a soft glow. Magnificent carvings of dogs in battle covered the ceilings, along with row after row of writing in a ring around the edges. A large throne sat in the very center of the room. It was made of iron with ruby arms. Diamond and topaz decorated the back of the chair. A large dog was leaned over in the chair asleep. Around the room the guards were falling over, and the dog only awoke when the torches

were blown out suddenly. A pair of blue eyes glowed in the entrance to the cavern and stared at him.

The king looked around at all the fallen guards before facing the eyes once more. "Who goes there?" A deep rumbling voice came from his mouth. He refused to show fear. Glowing writing appeared in the air before him.

'You have committed grave offenses to Equestria. How do you plead?'

"What offenses do you speak of creature? Only weaklings hide as you do."

"The kidnapping and enslavement of one hundred and fifty seven ponies. **How do you plead?**"

"We needed more diggers and ponies have spells to find gems. An easy way too skin two cats with one blade. Now show yourself coward."

The glowing letters faded and the eyes disappeared, leaving the room in darkness. Then a glow slowly spread across something near the entrance. Pink clouds surrounded by blackness and stars. Asteroids glided across the small patch of night sky. The king's eyes grew wide and he pressed himself against the back of his throne. "What is this?" His eyes narrowed.

'You have been judged. Now cease to be.' A small spear of ice was the last thing the dog saw.

No one noticed the young pair of eyes watching from behind a pillar.

Night Wing

'How did the extraction go?' I asked the Lunar pegasi beside me as we stepped over a dead dog lying on the floor.

"Good Captain. We managed to locate and retrieve all one hundred and fifty seven ponies, with minimal casualties on both sides."

‘Did any of the captives die?’ We stepped around another body as we led the poor ponies behind us to the surface.

“No sir, some of them are wounded but nothing life threatening.” A pony behind us vomited as we walked past a particularly messy body. The thestral looked back and winced. “Was it really a good idea to lead them out past the dead bodies? Couldn’t we have cleared the tunnels first?”

‘There is no time to clear the tunnels. The dogs will notice something is wrong and have reinforcements here soon.’ Fresh air hit my face as we crossed the threshold of the tunnels and stepped out onto grass. I glanced at the large mountain behind us before facing forwards and opening a large portal to the castle grounds. I stood to one side and the thestral with me stood on the other side. Ponies streamed from the tunnel, crying and thanking us as they passed. I payed them no mind and watched the tunnel closely. More guards were inside and they were helping the ponies out in a calm manner. We didn’t want any to get crushed in a mad dash for the exit.

As the last few ponies were leaving the tunnel my eyes narrowed at a distant barking. I saw dim lights far into the tunnel. ‘Hurry up! Dogs incoming!’ The last twenty or thirty ponies started rushing from the caves, trying to get to the portal as fast as possible. I picked up the ones that fell over and helped them to their feet with my magic. The guards formed a line in the tunnel, with their spears pointed in the direction of the approaching torches. As the first dog came into sight the unicorns started firing heat spells into the tunnel. Any dogs hit caught fire immediately, causing the dogs to slow down as they tried to get around the burning bodies. The tunnel was quite large so it didn’t totally impede their progress. ‘Come on! Get in the portal!’ “CAAAAW!!” I cried out as the last of the civilians made it through. The guards started rushing to the portal as the canines closed in. The furthest guard cried out as a dog lept at him with his spear outstretched. Until a portal opened under his feet and he flew out into the portal to the castle courtyard. I sealed the tunnel with a thick wall of ice as the last guards made it out. Then I followed the last guard into the portal as it closed.

I sighed as I sat in my room. It didn't have much in it, just an armor stand with my armor on it and a few bookshelves. The shelves didn't even have many books on them. Mainly knickknacks I had collected from different places. An ingot of blue steel, a couple of my feathers, a large purple egg, and more recently an solid iron spear inlaid with gems. I got that from our first encounter with the dogs. They had came from the northern mountains about six months ago, just a few packs of them. They quickly realized that Equestria had far more gems than their mountains. They started pouring from the mountains in search of gems, and they did whatever it took to find them. The packs would claim huge pieces of land for themselves, far too much for them to dig. So they would enslave ponies and the few griffins they found.

I got off my bed and approached my feather mirror. A quick touch and an image of Light Lance's office appeared in it. Light looked up as the early morning sun shine through his windows. "Ah, Night. How did the retrieval go last night?"

'It went well. How goes the border efforts?'

"Not well. More and more packs cross the border every day. We try to repel them but they find ways to sneak by. Usually by digging under us." Light rubbed at his temples. "We are still working out ways to stop them. And the High King refuses to speak with us." Light looked down to write something, a scowl on his face. "Then I have all this paperwork to do. We've been arresting more and more ponies for starting riots in towns near the border. And we have had trouble with the Thestrals."

'What do you mean trouble with the Thestrals?' This was new to me.

"The ponies don't want them in the border towns. They get chased out every time we send them. One got hospitalized by an angry mob and the doctors barely stabilized him."

'Why are they being chased out?' I had an idea already. But I wanted to be sure.

"Ponies are afraid Night. Strange creatures from the mountains are

taking their family and they can't do anything about it. So they take out their anger on the next best thing." He sighed and got up from his chair. The sun shone off his white fur as he stood by the window and looked over the city. "I asked Celestia to help us with the dogs. We can't punch through the defenses by ourselves."

'You know she can't help you with that Light. She doesn't have the ability to hurt so many living things.' I narrowed my eyes. 'She wants this to be over as much as we do, but she can't battle like that. It would kill her to end so many lives.'

"You're right. That's why she talked to Luna about it." Light winced as he spoke.

'She did **what?**' Light flinched as I glared at him. '**Why** would she ask **Luna** of all ponies.'

"Because this needs to end **Captain** Night." He returned my glare. "Ponies are suffering and it is **our** job to do what we can to protect them. Whether we like it or not." Luna had gotten violent in the past year. It was to be expected after Midnight died but we had been working with her, trying to rid her of the violent tendencies. She was always the first to jump to violent solutions, even for simple matters like someone stealing apples from the market. Unless it was a child. She was extremely gentle to children. She even let a child go without consequences after they knocked a wagon full of produce onto her in the town square. When a stallion bumped into her right after that incident, she slapped him onto the ground. She had made tremendous progress since then, no longer reacting violently to the smallest issues.

'I don't want to lose the progress we have made with Luna. She has come so far. To send her into battle would.....' my gaze wilted.

"I know Night. It hurts me to, but I don't see any other option. You can't find him because we don't know what he looks like. We don't even know his name! We just know he exist somewhere in the mountains. Once Luna gets us into the mountains we can find him, but until then this is the best plan we have." A flash of light signaled a scroll appearing before Light. It had a dark blue ribbon tied around it to signify it was from Luna. After a moment Light

glanced up to look at me through the mirror. "Luna will be joining me and my company in three days time." I was silent as I contemplated what this meant.

'Very well. I wish you good fortune with the assault. I will be busy extracting ponies from the dens nearby.' I waved my wing to shut off the connection between the mirrors.

"And I to you." I heard Light respond just before the mirror returned to showing space.

Three Days Later

Light Lance

The familiar sound of marching surrounded me as hundreds of metal clad hooves pounded the earth. Princess Luna and I lead the group to the edge of our territory. Already we were seeing scattered holes marking where Diamond Dogs had forced themselves into our land. The northern mountains towered over us, a great divider between us and the cold northern lands. As we approached the base of the mountains, a pack of dogs erupted from the ground ahead of us.

"Halt! State your business for entering the land of the High King!" The lead dog shouted out. I snorted in anger at that. *They come into our land against our will, yet they block our entrance into theirs.*

"We wish to speak with your High King." Princess Luna spoke in an even voice. "May we enter to open negotiations between our kingdoms?"

"By word of the High King himself, none shall enter the kingdom of the Dogs!" The dogs lifted their spears and I prepared to put up a shield around me and the Princess.

Until dark blue bolts shot them all. I looked over to see a glow fading from Princess Luna's horn. "Let us proceed to the negotiations Captain Light." There was no emotion on her face as she strode past the bodies. I gulped a little as we all followed her to

the mountains.

We had no Pegasi with us as they would be useless underground, where we were going. Unfortunately this also meant we had no eyes in the sky. Again, this was mostly useless since the dogs navigated under the earth. It would have made the soldiers feel better though. Up and up we walked, fighting against gravity as the ground slowly sloped upwards. Ahead of us was a giant hole in the rock. "We are approaching one of the main entrances your highness. Should we camp before heading in?" I glanced up at the fading light of the sky.

"Nay, we shall enter now. The time of day will not matter below the surface. It is only a matter of time before the sentries will be missed and the dogs start hunting us." Luna looked back over the ponies behind us. "We move in now." Then she turned around and walked into the dark depths without another word.

We had been walking for hours. The dogs knew we were here, they had to. We had seen nothing living as we descended deeper and deeper. Even the earth ponies were getting nervous in the low light. The unicorns were saving their energy for any fighting, so they provided minimal lighting. We passed tunnel after tunnel, following the main path. Soon lights could be seen ahead of us.

"Steady." I called out. The tunnel made my voice echo slightly, and everyone heard it despite me not yelling. The lights grew brighter until we could make out a large cavern ahead of us. My eyes narrowed against the light as I exited the tunnel and entered the well lit cave. It was a massive pocket in the stone, easily big enough to fit the Princesses' castle inside of.

Alcoves lines the walls, some had braziers and others had armored Dogs. At the very end was an onyx throne covered in gems and gold inlays. In fact, everything was covered in gems. Every kind of gems, even some I had never seen before. Large red gems that seemed to contain fire and deep blue that swirled like water inside. The ceiling had spirals of gems leading from the walls to one huge diamond embedded in the roof.

Seated in the throne was a large dog. Huge might be a better word.

He was wearing thick iron armor that was beautifully engraved and inlaid with large gemstones. A large staff with a glowing ruby rested in his right paw as he observed us with a lazy stare. He was leaning his head on his left paw, a bored expression on his face. "So, you have come to open negotiations with me? Strange, for someone so eager to kill my sentries."

"Yet you have invaded our country and enslaved our citizens." Luna countered.

"I never said I wanted to negotiate. I saw the massive amount of gems your country has, so I sent dogs to get them. It's not that hard to understand really." He lazily spun his staff around. I snarled as he insulted the Princess, yet she was calm as ever.

"You will withdrawl your dogs, and release your pony slaves to us." Luna's eyes hardened. "Or suffer the consequences."

"What consequences would those be?" He snapped his claws and two guards brought in a ragged mare. Her hooves were cracked and her eyes were blank. "You ponies make such good slaves. This one lasted almost a month in the mines before she collapsed. Unfortunately, she has outlived her usefulness." Faster than we could react he lowered his staff at the mare and a torrent of flame poured from it. Her screams echoed around the cavern as she was quickly incinerated. Some of the soldiers rushed forwards to help but were held back by Princess Luna. It was too late to do anything.

"You would do well to choose your next action very carefully." Luna states coldly as the king smirked at her.

"I believe my next action would be to capture you all for the mines. After all, I would be a fool to waste so many strong bodies." Dogs descended from the walls and surrounded us in seconds.

"Princess..." I whispered over to her. I looked over and felt a chill at the look in her eyes.

"I'm glad you chose wrong. I will enjoy this greatly." She yanked the king from his throne and pulled him into her waiting hoof, ending his life with a crunch. Then we dissapeared with a flash.

I shook my head as the light faded from my eyes and I saw we were outside once more. Everyone looked around in confusion until Princess Luna rose into the air. All eyes were on her as her horn glowed brightly, lighting up the surrounding area. Then we looked to the sky as the moon rose to block the sun. Suddenly the earth trembled as a ripple in the earth made it's way to the mountain. It made contact where the throne room was located and instantly the ground began to split and shatter. Thunder rolled across the land as the mountain crumbled and sank into the earth as a chasm opened beneath it. I sat down with an open mouth as the ground then sealed up, leaving no trace of there ever being a mountain there. The mountain chain had a gap in it now, and it looked as though it always did.

"I think this will be a wonderful trophy." Luna held up the former king's chest piece. "Let's head home and report the success Captain Light. I do not believe the dogs will bother us any longer."

Author's Notes:

Thanks to Hunter Redflame for helping me with writing this chapter. The end of the first half of the story is approaching. As always, I live on comments. Feed me.

[Discord](#)

Time Beckons

Night Wing

I coughed and waved a wing in front of my face, trying to clear the dust from the air. “Is everyone alright!?” Asked a soldier behind me. We had a group of about two hundred ponies in the cavern we were in. We had rescued them from the dens around the throne mountain. Thankfully none were in the mountain, as it had just collapsed. Although we weren't in said mountain, the shockwave and dust had traveled throughout the network of tunnels. Various moans and groans echoed around me as ponies tried to regain their footing. Some were in horrible states when we found them and some had died on the way out, simply too tired to go further. I cared for none of that as I looked down the tunnel the dust had came from. *Oh Luna. What have you done?*

Two Years Later

SHING!! I cut down a bandit that tried to sneak up behind me. ‘Get those civilians out of here!’ I blocked a spell with my wing, and it dissipated over my feathers. We were currently defending a trade convoy from bandits. And by we, I mean me and one other guard. We didn’t expect an attack this big, obviously.

“WAAAAAAAH!!” I looked over to see a filly stuck under a carriage as spells and arrows flew over it. I had to admit, the ponies in the convoy were holding their own pretty well. I opened a portal under the filly and dropped her beside me. I covered her with a wing and slowly started walking to the edge of the woods while blocking spells, and occasionally returning a few.

“Night! This way looks clear!” I had to resist the urge to snort as Clear Sight shouted to me from the woods. His bright green coat and pink mane made him easy to see. I made my way over to him along with the other ponies on our side. I raised a small wall of ice to save a stallion from getting impaled by a spear. A small push with telekinesis to deflect an arrow here, a fireball back at the

enemy there. The sight of spells and weapons flying over the wide road filled me with excitement and adrenaline. Mostly adrenaline, as I didn't have much time to marvel at the scene. I broke the wing of a dive bombing pegasus, causing him to crash into the caravans store of firewood. The flames I shot at him afterwards didn't help him much.

'Everyone get to the woods! Quickly!' Those who saw my message relayed it to others as they ran to the trees. I covered their hasty retreat with a thick mist from my wings. I portaled myself and the filly over to Clear Sight and quickly ran into the trees with the two in tow. Celestia would not be happy. This was the third caravan lost in two weeks. I sighed while dodging branches and trees. The nearest town was not close at all. As soon as we regrouped I would portal us all there.

With a WOOSH the portal shut behind me, everyone else already having gone through. I collapsed, exhausted, and Clear ran to my side to help me up. "Are you ok Captain?"

'Yes, I'm perfectly fine. Collapsing is a sign of good health in my species.' I sarcastically replied while observing the ponies around us. I smiled when the filly from earlier hugged her mother with a tearful smile. 'You better send a letter to Luna. Let her know what happened. It's too late for Celestia to be awake.' Clear Sight shifted uncomfortably at that, and my gaze hardened.

"Yes sir! Right away!" He flew off to write the letter after I glared at him. I couldn't help but sigh after he left. *Ridiculous. Even the guards are nervous around Luna.* My eyes softened slightly as I made my way into a large tent. *I can't blame them though. It's not their fault, they just....don't know her like I do. They only see the bad.* I hoped that would change soon. I could see Luna suffering from the fear ponies had of her. Gone was the love for their princess, replaced by cold fear. Only time would tell if that changed or not.

'Finally! Home!' I sighed in contentment as me and Clear entered the barracks of the castle. 'Farewell Clear Sight, I have much paperwork to complete.' With a nod in his direction, I teleported up

to my office. *The only bad thing about getting home. Paperwork.* My smile shrunk slightly as papers floated onto my desk. I sat in my chair and pulled out one of my many quills. They were from my own wings of course, why buy feathers when you produce your own? Plus, everyone knows when I write something with mine. No other feathers have sparkly writing. It was a fact I was proud of. Do you have any idea how fun it is to write with a flaming feather? Very fun.

My thoughts were interrupted by knocking at my door. “Chirp!” I called for them to enter. My smile grew once more as Luna walked in. I left my chair and went to hug her. ‘How are you Luna?’

“I am....ok” Luna had a familiar expression on her face. One that was becoming increasingly familiar. My beak formed a slight frown as I backed up to let her in. “Sapphire is sleeping.” She crossed the room and collapsed in an extra chair.

‘You look tired.’ My chair squeaked as I sat back in it.

“I am.” She laid her head on my desk. “I don’t have the energy to stay up through the night anymore. Sapphire is a very active little filly.” A small smile cut through her frown. “I can’t wait till she is older. Then we can watch the stars together every night. But for now, the doctors say she needs to sleep at night.”

‘Well, it is important to listen to the doctors.’ Came my absentminded answer as I focused on my writing.

“Another thestral was killed today. In a town to the east.” My head rose to meet Luna’s gaze.

‘I’m so sorry Luna.’ A sigh escaped me and I walked around the desk to hug her.

“Am I really that scary Night? That our subjects fear of **me** would cause them to kill someone else? Do I not deserve their love?” Tears formed in her eyes and dripped down onto my feathered shoulder.

‘Luna, don’t ever think that. You are a wonderful pony, they just don’t realize that. They are too blind to see through their own

ideas.' I pulled back and looked her in the eyes. 'Have you talked to Celestia about this?'

"Hah! She is too caught up in sifting through paperwork to notice the truth. I have brought it up with her, but she claims I am overreacting." A scowl formed on Luna's face, even while she cried. "She doesn't understand."

'I will talk to her. She should pay more attention to your pains. You two are sisters, together forever.' I smiled, trying to cheer up Luna. 'Why don't we go raid the kitchens? I'm sure we can sneak some pastries past the chefs.' Luna smiled at that.

"You always know how to cheer me up Night. Let us do that."

One Year Later

Luna

"And that is Pegasus." I pointed out the constellation to Sapphire. "And there are the Unicorn and Earth Pony constellations."

"Is there a hippogryph in the sky mommy?" I looked down into the eyes of my daughter.

"Of course there is sweetie. Right there. And just above it is the proud Griffin." My hoof traced out the stars as I looked down to my side and smiled. "Legend has it that a brave griffin gave his life to save his daughter, who was a hippogryph. When he died, he was immortalized in the heavens for all to see and remember."

"Really!?" Sapphire snuggled closer to my side.

"Yes." A chuckle escaped me. "Really." I looked around conspiratorially before leaning down and whispering in her ear. "Don't tell uncle Night, but that one over there is him." I pointed to a group of stars beside the other two. "I made that the official constellation of 'Night'." My hoof blocked a giggle from my lips.

"Ok, I won't tell him mommy." Sapphire laughed, music to my ears. "But only if you give me more cookies later."

“Blackmail!?” I gasped loudly. “My dear daughter, that is a very naughty thing to do.”

“But it gets me more cookies doesn’t it?”

“I suppose it does. Let’s go back inside, the sun will rise soon. And yes, I will give you two more cookies. But no more!”

“Fiiiine.”

I softly closed the bedroom door as I left, and turned towards my own. “Chirp.” My head snapped around to see Night standing behind me.

“Oh! Hello Night, how are you tonight.”

‘I am well. I see you and Sapphire were watching the star again?’ Night seemed amused about something.

“Yes. It is a favorite activity of hers and mine.” I narrowed my eyes in suspicion at him as he chuckled. “What’s so funny Night, is something on my face?”

‘Oh no, I was just thinking about the craziest thing I overheard a couple guards talking about. Some new constellation called ‘Night’. I couldn’t help but notice the resemblance to myself.” With that, Night changed to look like the constellation of, well, himself. “Anyways, good **night** Luna. Sweet dreams.” Then He teleported away with a burst of black.

“I swear, I can’t do anything without him knowing.” I grumbled as I made my way to my bedroom.

Night Wing

Three Years Later

‘You need to work on your defense.’ I looked down at a stunned Sapphire. ‘I didn’t even try to hit you with that last spell, and I hit you several times with my wings.’

“Go ahead, rub it in.” Sapphire got back to her feet. *Cant really say hooves or claws can I? She has both.* “Besides, I hit you a couple times.”

‘Yes, but I hit you more. Which means you lose, which means get back to practicing you defense.’ I whistled loudly and a nearby guard ran over to me. ‘Shiny, help Sapphire practice defending herself. Don’t go easy on her.’ After receiving a nod of confirmation, I took to the air.

I had been sparring with Sapphire every day for a few weeks now. She wanted to go on adventures in the guard, but her mother said no. I made a compromise. Train her to defend herself and, in Luna’s words, crush her enemies. Then she would be free to join the guard. Under my supervision. *Yay for more responsibilities.* I wasn’t upset by it, not really. I acted like it sometimes, but I enjoyed being around Sapphire. She was the closest thing I ever had to a child, and I loved her with all my heart. It was fun being an uncle.

As I soared through the sky, I decided to do a few barrel rolls around the castle. Then I dove down to enter the throne room. *let us see what the peasants are asking of their queen today.* I joked to myself as I slid across the marble entrance on my claws. It’s like sliding on wood floors with socks. Unsurprisingly, the high class ponies lined up in the entrance hall were not happy. Surprisingly, a couple were being dragged out by guards.

“Chirp!” I grabbed there attention. ‘What happened? Why are these ponies being removed?’ The two ponies glared at me, not saying anything due to the magic holding their mouths shut. One of the four guards nervously coughed before answering.

“Well, sir, there is a.....situation in the throne room. These two overheard the Princess talking with two others about a upcoming marriage.”

‘Why would this be a problem? Two ponies getting married is a wonderful thing, is it not?’ I looked at the two restrained ponies, and their glares only deepened.

“Well, uh. About that.” The guard looked around nervously.

“You...you should go see, yourself.” With that, the guards continued to drag away the nobles. My brows furrowed and I turned to face the throne room doors.

Well, my day isn't going to be boring I suppose. My claws clicked on the marble as the doors opened just wide enough for me to get through, and not enough for any other ponies to see in. To say I was surprised was a little bit of an understatement.

“Night! So good to see you! Come and hear the wonderful news these two are telling me!” Celestia smiled widely. My anxiety lessened upon seeing her smile. I wandered further into the room as the two individuals before me nervously watched my approach. Instead of the two ponies I was expecting, it was a pony and a griffin.

“Well, this certainly a surprise. Am I to assume the two of you are the cause of the trouble outside?” They both nodded, and the hen looked like she was about to cry. The stallion moved to comfort her. ‘Good.’ I smiled to ease her fears. “The nobles need a good kick every once in a while. Now, am I to assume you two are the future couple I heard about?”

“Well, we came here to ask for the Princesses support.” The stallion spoke up.

“This is only the second time a marriage such a ours has occurred.” The hen started. “I.... well, with what happened to the first one....” She looked up at me with sad eyes. “I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to bring up painful memories for you and the Princess.”

‘It’s ok, I understand your fears. Believe me when I say I will support you two in anyway I can. However, I can’t speak for Celestia. You came here for her support after all, not mine.’ I smiled and gestured to Celestia. She nodded her thanks to me and faced the couple once more.

“You two have my full support in you marriage. I’ll even cover the cost for the wedding. And if you want it here in the palace I can arrange that for you as well. I would love to encourage more marriages such as yours, too many are fearful of other species.”

Celestia smiled as both of them spluttered.

“Oh no Princess! Tha-That won’t be needed! We have everything handled!” The stallion rushed to deny Celestia's offer.

“Oh, but I insist!” Celestia laughed softly behind her hoof.

“However, if you really don’t want my assistance, then I suppose that is your decision.”

‘I suggest you take her offer. It’s not everyday a Princess offers to pay for your wedding.’

“I.... Ok, we will accept your help.” The hen responded after looking over at the stallion.

‘I still haven’t gotten your names, forgive me for not asking sooner.’

“It’s perfectly fine, my name is Sunshine Dash. And this is my bride to be, Prism Height.” I could see where the two got their names. Sunshine was a bright yellow pegasus, with a white mane. Prism had light gray feathers with an iridescent quality to them. Her fur was a slightly darker gray, with a black tip on her tail.

‘It’s nice to meet you both, and I hope your marriage works out perfect.’

“Thank you, very much.” Prism nuzzled into her fiancé. “However, I think it would be better if we could have a more private wedding. Not here in the castle, if that’s ok.”

“I understand, do you have an idea of where you plan to have the wedding? I would very much like to attend.” Celestia smiled wider as the hen and stallion grew even more nervous.

‘If you don’t have a location yet, that’s ok. Take your time to pick a good place. Besides, I’m sure there is one more Princess that would love to attend.’

“W-well, we have a few places in mind.” Prism looked up at Sunshine.

“We can have a location for you in a few days. Thank you for your

generosity Princess.”

“It is no problem, take your time.” They both bowed before leaving. “So, it seems some of our ponies are becoming more accepting. But this whole situation leaves me with one question.” Celestia looked over at me intently.

‘And what is that?’

“When are **you** getting married.”

‘I’m not discussing this right now.’ I turned to leave as Celestia giggled.

“Wait! Me and Luna have put together a list of potential females!”

‘Nope.’ With that I took to the air, quickly leaving the throne room, my sister’s laughs echoing behind me.

Three Years Later

Air rushed through my feathers as I soared over the hippogryph village. It wasn’t far from the main town, maybe an hour walking. Several families inhabited the few buildings, simple hay roofs and wooden walls, none of the stone buildings from the main city. A small well in the middle, with a little market square around it made up the town square. I had taken to personally patrolling the area, to make sure nothing happened to the inhabitants.

A few guards had to be removed from service for letting some citizens be harassed by others. Usually it was colts and fillies throwing rocks or calling names, easy things to deal with but hurtful nonetheless. Occasionally, stallions and mares would throw the rocks. On one occasion a hippogryph was nearly killed by a pony. Luna.....well, that stallion won’t hurt another being for a long time. Unfortunately this just made her public image worse.

“OWW!” I snapped my neck to look over to my right. A few colts were throwing rocks at a young hippogryph filly...or hen. *Stop rocks now. Debate names of different species’ genders later.*

“HAHA! I thought griffins were supposed to be tough!” One of the three colts yelled out. As he threw another rock I opened a portal in front of it. I landed silently behind them as the rock hit him in the back of the head. “Hey! Who threw tha-!”

‘Me.’ The colts hit the dirt as they saw me standing over them. ‘Is there a problem here?’ I looked over at the young hippogryph and waved a wing at the village. She ran off without another word. ‘It looks to me as if you were assaulting a poor little filly. My, what tough individuals you must be, three of you defeating a single small child.’

“W-well, she was, uh, she...”

‘Yes? Do tell me what she did to provoke you.’

“She existed!” Another colt spoke up. “The hippogryphs aren’t natural, and my daddy says their gunna take our land when they spread out!” He stood up now, and the other two got braver as he did.

“Yeah!” The third one spoke up. “They can’t work the land like us earth ponies can, so when they get it they won’t be able to make enough food for themselves. Then they’ll starve, and the rest of the community will suffer. That’s why us ponies are betterer!”

‘I see. So, your simply doing your duty to your community by sorting out the ones who aren’t as useful? Am I getting that right?’ They all nodded, with smug smiles. ‘Well then, I suppose I better do the same.’ With that, I grabbed them all in my telekinesis and lifted them into the air with me. Their terrified shrieks barely reached my ears as we ascended above the clouds. Then, with out much care, I dropped them onto a cloud after putting a cloudwalking spell on them.

“I think I wet myself.....” the smallest one whimpered as he looked over the edge.

“Chirp.” I got their attention. ‘Now, I put a cloudwalking spell on you. As you pointed out, we don’t want anyone who isn’t as useful as others are. So, I’m doing my civil duty to weed out the useless

ones. And seeing as how you can't move the clouds like a pegasus or a hippogryph, you aren't useful right now. Now, in about ten minutes the spell will wear off and you'll fall.'

"I definitely wet myself...."

'But you don't need to worry about that, because this cloud will disappear in five minutes.' With a small POOF a section of the cloud behind me disappeared. 'Make that three. Anyways, I've gotta go eat some lunch, so while I'm gone prove that you're **betterer** than I think.' With that I dropped off the cloud and descended to the ground. Of course, I wasn't actually going to eat lunch. I was going to wait until the cloud disappeared and then I would catch them.

A small nudge on my back drug my attention away from the cloud up high. I turned around to see the small hippogryph from before. "I wanted to say thank you Mister Night Wing." Her adorable little voice almost melted my heart.

'It was no problem little one. Now go home to your mother.' I smiled as she flew off and turned back around as I heard screaming. *Hmm. The cloud disappeared faster than I thought.* I opened up a portal on the ground, and another one right beside it. They flew down into one and up out of the other. I grabbed them as they started to fall again, and pulled them close to my face.

'So, what did we learn?'

"Th-th-that falling is really scary." The small one answered.

'Try again.'

"That we can't do everything!?" The largest practically yelled. I never knew ponies could turn white from fear.

'Wonderful! You can't do everything, and others can do things you can't. For example, a hippogryph could have rescued you from that cloud. Now, if I see you near here causing trouble again I won't grab you out of the portals. I'll just let you fall for a few hours.' I set them down and they left dust trails trying to get away. *Kids these days.....I sound like an old man.*

One Year Later

My wing tingled as the surface changed to show Luna's worried face. 'Luna. It's been five minutes since you last checked on us. We, are, fine.' I sighed as three other guards and Sapphire marched alongside me.

"I know I know, I'm worrying over nothing. But I always worry when you take Sapphire on trips around the border. Bandits love to raid travelers out there."

"Mom, I'll be fine. I'm just as trained as anyone else here. Maybe even a little better. Uncle Night did train me after all." She looked over at Silver walking with us. "Plus, you sent Silver with us."

'Gee, not me but Silver. My feelings.' I smiled a little at Sapphire's flat look.

"Anyways, I'm fine mom. We're just going to check around the border. Besides, we'll only be a portal away."

"Fine, I will try to distract myself while you are away. Perhaps I shall try baking again. If Tasteful Dishes will let me in after last time." My Wing faded to black once more.

"Enjoy it while you can." Silver spoke up.

"What do you mean?" Sapphire looked confused.

"Your mother worrying about you. I wish mine could still worry about me..." Silver looked into the distance with a sad look.

"What happened to her?" Sapphire walked closer to her in an attempt to comfort her.

"She died of a disease. It was a long time ago, I've gotten over it." She smiled down at Sapphire. "But you still have your mother. Enjoy all the time you can with her."

"Pssssh, I'm pretty sure my mom **can't** die."

"You still have a lot to learn about life." Silver smiled and walked

on ahead.

“Hurry! Get everyone into the air!” Silver called out behind me. We had been on patrol when Celestia called us. The hippogryph village was ablaze. It didn’t take us long to get back, just a quick portal, but then we had to gather the soldiers and pegasi trained for fires. Silver was currently getting everyone moving while we glided over the field around the castle. The air was filled with turbulence as around fifty pegasi lifted off the ground. As I opened a large portal for the earth ponies and unicorns, heatwaves rolled out onto the grass. The pegasi soared into the sky and grabbed as many clouds as they could before following behind the others.

Going through the portal was almost painful, heat and light from the fires causing us all to squint. ‘Get those clouds above the buildings! Search for survivors!’ I rushed to the nearest building and started freezing the wood. The flames slowly died down as ice overtook them. A few of the flames themselves actually froze near the spot feathers met wood. As soon as the flames where out, I moved to the next building while ponies searched the now extinguished building. And so the night continued, I would put out a fire, then move on to the next building. The village wasn’t huge so it didn’t take long and soon we only had one more building on fire.

Once more I put my wings on the broken wood of the collapsed building, pushing out my magic to freeze out the fires. This fire had almost burned completely out, most likely being the first, so it wasn’t hard to snuff. No, what was hard was seeing the remains after the fire was out. A family of charred hippogryphs lay under the collapsed beams. For a split second I saw Sapphire instead of the unrecognizable blackened hippogryph. Then I pushed my emotions aside and turned to the others. ‘Try to identify the bodies and the cause of the fire. If it was intentional, I want whoever is responsible caught and brought to me.’

Silver lifted off beside me and we began circling the burned town. “Do you think it was set on purpose?” Slitted eyes gazed into my own.

‘Do you think it wasn’t?’ I dove down to examine some broken

shrubbery. ‘Tracks. Headed south. Go alert the Las Pegasus guards to be on the alert for any suspicious characters.’ I opened a portal and Silver slipped through, disappearing from sight. I closed it right after, thinking in the darkness.

Two Years Later

Luna

“Take everything useful then burn the bodies.” The Officer nodded as I cleaned the blood off my battle axe. “Send Captain Lance a message, ‘The western bandit clan has been disassembled. I will return home shortly’.”

“Yes ma’am.” I returned my attention to cleaning my axe, searching for any last spots of blood. It was a thing of beauty, made of blue steel with obsidian inlays along the handle. I pulled out a whetstone once I was sure the blood was off, and began running it along the edges of the blade. Many of the soldiers were confused about why I was here, taking out bandit camps alongside them. The simple answer was I was bored. Night didn’t know I was doing this of course, he would never let me. He would find some way to stop me. But now that Sapphire was away all the time.... I had nothing to do really. I tried night court for a long time, but no one ever came. Baking didn’t interest me despite my sisters constant insisting that I would like it if I kept trying it. And lowering and raising the moon took only a few minutes each day. I used to go and spend time with the hippogryphs, but after the village burned down they all fled. I didn’t blame them, what parents would want their children in such dangerous conditions? The last contact we had with them was just over one year ago. Night had scryed them, and they were somewhere near the ocean. After that, we couldn’t see them anymore. So with nothing else to do, I joined the guards every once in awhile.

Hunting down bandits gave me a rush like nothing else. The feeling of the hunt was one I had grown to love. Besides, it gave me a more hooves on method for keeping our kingdom safe. Suddenly the blade of my axe shifted colors, changing to show the face of my daughter. Quickly spinning the blade away from the death and

destruction, I smiled brightly. Seeing Sapphire always made me smile.

“Mom, are you polishing your axe **again**? That’s the fifth time this month.”

“What do you expect me to do while you’re away from home? Break into the wine cellar again?” We shared a laugh at that memory. Half the castle was orange for a week. “Oh I miss you so much. When are you coming home?”

“Only a few more months mom. Being on southern border patrol doesn’t leave much time for fun. Who knew?” Sapphire gave me a sad smile. “And I miss you too. I can’t wait to be back. We just have to finish investigating the weird claims down here. Flying lizards that shoot fire. I’m starting to believe the locals are eating strange plants.” Her ears swiveled behind her and a frown spread across her face. “Anyways, I’ve got to go mom. I’ll try and see you again tomorrow. Love you, bye!” With that the axe returned to normal, and the smile fell from my face.

I stood and met the others in front of the burning fort, carts filled with random bits of material and weaponry taking up the open space. “Are we ready to leave Officer Sturdy Step?”

“Yes ma’am, all troops accounted for and ready to go.” Sturdy saluted with a blank expression.

“Good. Let us return home.”

One Year Later

Night Wing

“KEEEEEAR!!!” I shoved back against the crowd with my shield. ‘Cease this at once!’

“Stop this madness!” Black Iron yelled out beside me. Silver, Lotus, and Moon were with Luna to ensure her safety. “Go back to your homes or we will have to remove you with force!” Some of the local villagers were rioting at the castle currently. Maybe a fourth of all

the villagers were trying to shove their way into the castle. It all started about a week ago when we got an anonymous report of some domestic abuse. I went in to investigate discreetly and found that the claim was valid. A stallion was coming home drunk and beating on his wife, quite regularly judging by all the empty bottles in the house. When I reported my findings to Celestia and Luna.....things went wrong.

Luna didn't take the news very well and had the stallion publicly banished from Equestria. The only problem is that the other citizens didn't believe the claims. The stallion was well known for being an upstanding citizen, had lots of friends, no crime record, and always got to work on time. The fact that Luna did the banishing without Celestia beside her didn't help matters. Luna had gotten a reputation for being harsh on stallions for small things. All this, combined with the fact that the mare involved was too scared to confirm the claims publicly, made quite a mess. It seems someone went around spreading rumors and gathering supporters, then decided to storm the castle demanding Luna be banned from Equestria herself.

A flash of light above everyone stopped the pushing and shoving quickly. Celestia hovered above everyone with a disappointed glare. She descended to the ground, the crowd creating an area for her to land. "Finally!" A random mare yelled out. "Celestia will help us b-" The bright flash of a stunning spell knocked the mare onto the hard stones. Everyone looked on in shocked silence, even myself. Celestia never did anything like that.

"Green Fern, please state what you wish to say." A green earth pony stepped out from behind Celestia. She was shaking with fear, looking at all the ponies around her. "It's ok, your safe. Tell everyone the truth." She looked back at Celestia and gathered her strength.

"I-it's true, what they said. My husband was hurting me. Please stop all this fighting, it isn't necessary." She cowered as one of the stallions stepped forward.

"You mean Snow Peak really did those horrible things to you?"

“Yes. Please leave the Princess alone, she was trying to help.” Fern was huddled almost under Celestia at this point.

“There! You all have your proof! Now begone from the castle grounds, now!” Celestia looked truly angry at this point, and no one dared argue with her. One by one the ponies trickled out of the courtyard before it was just me, the guards, Celestia, and Green Fern.

“Thank you Miss Fern. We didn’t want to hurt them but they were getting rowdy.” I bowed slightly to express my thanks.

“I don’t want anyone else getting hurt over this. I’m sorry for all the trouble Princess.” Fern hung her head and moved to leave.

“Don’t be sorry Fern. This isn’t your fault. None of it is.” Celestia wrapped a wing around her. “Have a safe trip home and get some rest. You deserve it.” Fern nodded with a small smile and walked out of the gate, letting silence retake the area.

‘I’m going to talk to Luna. This isn’t going to be pretty.’

“I feel bad for you Sir. I know Luna will take this hard.” Black Iron saluted to me as I flew up the castle towers, landing on Luna’s balcony. I tapped a few times on the darkened glass and it opened just enough for Silver to see me.

“You better get in here.” She opened the door fully. “She needs you to comfort her.” With that, all the guards left the room. I sighed as I shut the door and went to try and comfort Luna.

Author's Notes:

Discord

Time skips ahoy! Avast ye salty sea dogs! Prepare yeeselves fer ruff seas on the.....ok yeah, enough pirate talk. (Totally not a hint at things to come) Anyways, as you may or may not have noticed this chapter.....lots of time skips.....if you couldn’t tell..... Realistically, I can’t write a story that

takes place over one thousand years without time skips. But, I am not going to skip EVERYTHING. This chapter is mainly just to advance us to the whole NMM thing, while showing the deteriorating conditions around Night Wing.

This chapter was proofread by Kitkataddel

Broken

Six Months Later

“-You don’t understand sister! And you never will! Just look at ho-!”
The voices fade once more as I banged my head on the wall.

“How long have they been at it now?” Lotus asked as she sat upside down against the wall, her legs kicking back and forth up in the air as her head and shoulders rested on the floor. “Three and a half hours now?”

“Four.” Black Iron sat on the floor beside her, opting to sit normally. “Four hours.” He had bags under his eyes and his wings were loosely hanging from his sides.

“Your helmet hitting the wall in killing my head Night.” Moon Beam lay on the floor with her wings over her head. Apparently, she had a headache. I ignored her comment, continuing to lightly hit my helmeted head on the wall.

“Are you sure you’re alright sir?” Silver asked me for the umpteenth time.

‘Yes, I’m just....thinking.’ I never stopped hitting my head on the wall. Something was gnawing at the back of my mind, just under the surface.

“I know your stressed out Night, but Luna and Celestia will stop arguing soon. They always do.” Lotus mumbled out.

“Be a little more sensitive Lotus, they’re his sisters.” Silver snapped back at her.

‘It’s not that. It’s something else, I just.....Gah! It’s right there in my mind! I can’t remember what it is though!’ I switched from hitting my head to pacing back and forth.

“-on’t understand!? I have the same problems as **you** Luna! You ju-“

Celestia's voice broke through the nearby wall for a second.

"Ooooh, that wasn't a good thing to say." Iron winced as something wooden sounding shattered on the other side of the wall.

"You know, every once in a while I consider going in there to calm them down." Lotus looked at the wall as another thump sounded in the hall. "Then something big hits the wall and I'm reminded of my own mortality." Moon whimpered at all the banging and pulled her head further under her wings. Iron pulled his helmet over his head and tried to sleep. Lotus tossed her helmet in the air and caught it repeatedly, and Silver watched me pace up and down the hall.

'It's like I forgot something huge. I know it's not good, but I'm just getting impressions and feelings of it. It feels terrifying, something to do with.....I don't know!' I dragged my wings down my face, trying to pull out the memory.

"-hy do I even listen to you any more! You don't even pay attention to me! Ever! Maybe if you pulled yourself away from work to care for your family you wou-" Luna shouted as several more things hit the wall. I was glad Sapphire was away from the city that day. She always hated when Luna and Celestia fought like that.

"Hey, who's going to pay us if they kill each other?" Lotus asked randomly, making all of us stop and look at her. "What? It's a basic job security question."

"Would it kill you all to be quiet?" Moon asked, clearly in pain. Once more we fell into silence.

"-o wonder ponies don't look up to you! You walk around town beating up stallions and come home covered in blood from killing monsters! I wouldn't like you either if I didn't know you!" Celestia yelled.

"Ouch. I felt that one, and she wasn't even talking about me." Iron commented quietly. Meanwhile, my head started to hurt. A growing pain started in the back of my head, there but not there at the same time. My eyes clenched shut as I tried to remember what was in the back of my mind. It was practically burning now, sitting just under

the surface like hot coals under water.

‘Something. Something important. What is it!’ I leaned on the wall and started tapping the back of my head on the wall. *This is going to kill me if I don’t remember it!*

“-aybe I’ll just have to make them respect me then! If they won’t willingly love me, I’ll just have to for-” Luna yelled out, the sound dying behind the wall once more. My head was throbbing now.

‘It’s so close, right on the edge of my mind!’ I pushed harder trying to bring it just a little bit closer to the surface.

“It’s okay Night. I’m sure you’ll remember it soon.” Silver said as she moved to sit beside me. She yawned loudly and leaned back against the wall with me. I narrowed my eyes as the memory started breaking through.

‘Something about a Nightmare....’

BOOOM!! The wall blew apart behind me and Silver, throwing us across the hall and into the wall. Silver was knocked unconscious immediately but I scrambled back to my claws. Only to fall again as my head filled with things not there before. I tried to lift my head, but my eyes slowly slid shut as darkness consumed me.

Sapphire

I was gliding over the city, watching the streets for trouble. I had just got back from helping set up a new guard station in a new town not far away. *Oh I can’t wait to get to bed. Maybe I’ll see mom before I do that, I’ll have to see if I’m too tired when I get there.* My wings felt like lead, and trying to flap them was almost impossible. That is, until I saw the smoke rising from the castle. “Oh no.”

I rushed forward, pushing my wings faster. My head was already filling with bad thoughts as the smoke cloud got bigger. “Please be okay....”

Night Wing

“-ight, come on get up Night!” I heard Moon yelling in my ear. “Captain! You’re okay!” She gave me a small hug before backing off. “We have to hurry! The Princesses are trying to kill each other!” My half-awake mind heard ‘kill’ and ‘Princesses’ and snapped awake.

‘What!? What do you mean there trying to kill each other!?’ My eyes widened as I looked around, seeing the forest through the ruined walls. FWOOOOSH!! A giant gold beam cut through the roof ten feet away, collapsing the rest of the roof. I put a shield over me, Moon, and the still unconscious Silver, Lotus, and Iron. I quickly portaled Iron, Lotus, and Silver to the barracks as I took in the scene in the sky. Blue and yellow lights flashed high in the clouds, seeming to chase each other around in a deadly dance.

“What do we do!?” Moon panicked as my mind remembered things it had somehow forgotten.

‘Nightmare Moon.....’ *How could I let this happen... How could I forget this!? Luna! Wha-This is all my fault.* Moon slapped me across the face.

“Ooooh I’m so getting fired for that.” She whispered to herself. “Captain! Focus, what do we do? The sisters are trying to kill each other and eventually one is going to succeed!”

‘Your right. Sorry, gather the guards and keep the local population safe. I’ll try to stop this nonsense.’ Without waiting for a response I took to the sky, rapidly gaining height. I threw up a shield to block a stray beam before continuing up. I broke through the clouds just in time to see Celestia hit Luna with a golden ball, throwing her beneath the clouds again. Celestia followed suit, and I dropped as well. *I have to get to them before this gets out of hand!....More out of hand than it is anyways.*

“SURRENDER SISTER!!” Celestia yelled out, brandishing her sword. My eyes were almost shut as I tried to catch up with my sisters, wind whistling by me.

“I WILL NEVER SURRENDER! YOU DIE TONIGHT!!” Luna screamed back. Through the misty clouds I could see her coat begin to take on

a darker hue, and her voice started to change slightly. Luna stopped and swung her axe at Celestia only to have it blocked by her sword. They pushed against each other for a second before splitting away back into the clouds.

FWOOSH! A beam of dark blue pierced the clouds beside me as I tried to track where they were fighting. Flashes of gold lit the undersides of the clouds ahead, and I raced forward to stop my worst fears from happening. With a mighty CRACK a white body flew past me, a broken sword flying through the air with it. *Oh god!* I turned around to give chase just as a black blur shot past me making me spin out of control. Quickly regaining control, I saw said blur shoot a beam of pure black at Celestia. She seemed to recover just before it hit her and dodged the deadly ray. However, her wing was bent in half and the ground was coming up fast. I tried to catch up but could only watch helplessly as Celestia impacted the ground, sending up a cloud of dust. Luna followed just behind her, bellowing a war cry.

Dust and sand stung my eyes, blinding me completely. “KEEEAR!!” Letting out a short call, I began choking on the dust.

“STAY OUT OF THIS NIGHT!!” Luna shouted from somewhere to my right. *There!* I saw a flash of yellow amid the dust and rushed to meet it. The dust had started to settle back to the ground, exposing Luna holding Celestia down on the ground. Luna had her axe pressed to Celestia’s throat, a fang-filled grin spread across her face. “Finally, I have you. You’re going to pay for the years of pain sister.” Luna started to push down on the axe, blood leaking from Celestia’s neck as I stood there frozen. I unfroze when a gray blur hit Luna on the side, knocking her away. Luna and the blur tumbled for awhile before they stopped, Luna once more on top. Moon Beam struggled under her as Luna lifted the axe high above her head.

“Betrayed by yet another pony. What else did I expect?” Luna calmly said as she picked up Moon and tossed her beside Celestia. “Two for the price of one. That will make this much sweeter.” Luna’s grin came back and her horn started to glow. I was still frozen, watching in horror, unable to believe what was happening in front of me. Then black energy shot from her horn and time seemed to slow down. My eyes focused in on Celestia laying on the

ground, blood leaking from her throat. No....

THUD! Celestia fell onto the ground beside me as my portal closed, the beam hit the ground, and I threw Luna into the forest all at the same time. The pressure wave I threw at Luna tore a line through the forest, downing trees for a good one hundred feet. Limbs creaked and cracked as Luna flew further still. But my attention was on Celestia. I spun around and pressed my wing to the wound, pumping healing magic into it. I sighed with relief as it closed up, and Celestia just sighed normally as her breathing was restored.

More trees started cracking dragging my attention back towards the woods. But my eyes stopped on the broken batpony laying in the dirt. 'Moon!' I ran over to Moon and checked to see if she was alive. I knew the answer before I even looked, but it still shocked me to see her chest completely still. No breath left her mouth, and the light was gone from her eyes. The huge hole in her side was obviously the cause of death, and the sad expression on her face shattered my heart.

"NIGHT WING!!" Luna screamed at me from the forest edge. "Don't go against me! You don't have to side with her!" She pointed at Celestia, who was just getting up. "You know ponies are afraid of you too Night! You and I can make them love us, make them respect us!"

'Luna, don't do this. Please just stop!' I looked at her pleadingly. "Cooo." I let a sad sound, trying to get to her. "This isn't the way to fix things! Think about this!"

"I have thought about it! I've thought about it for YEARS!!" She screamed the last part. "YEARS Night! Years spent in the shadow of that hag!" She once again pointed at Celestia. Celestia was just standing there, trying to catch her breath. "Well no more. You'll see Night! I'll fix everything..." Then she lunged forward at Celestia.

"CAAAAW!" 'Noo!' I tried to block it, but something hit me in the back, severe pain shooting through me. Celestia threw up a shield at the last second, blocking the axe. And then they were gone again, lighting up the sky in a show of power. I turned my head around to see a wooden board imbedded in my back. Luna must have stabbed

me with it to keep me from interfering anymore. I looked up at the sound of cracking to see one of the castle towers fall. Flashes of gold and dark blue shone from the windows of what was Starswirl's old tower. *The elements.*

I knew what Celestia was going for. And I couldn't let that happen. I tried to stand up, to crawl, anything to get me closer to stopping them. But blood loss was making my vision dark and my limbs heavy. 'Please, don't do this.' My eyes widened as a bright white light began to shine in the shattered remains of the tower.

'NOOOO!' The stone bricks exploded outward as a rainbow pierced the heavens. I rolled over, not caring that the wooden board shoved further into me, and stared up at the moon. Slowly, craters began to appear on the surface. They took on the very familiar, but equally heartbreaking, shape of a unicorn head. Tears filled my eyes as I stared up at the moon, my vision fading completely as I bled out.

Silver Wing

I woke when I heard an explosion in the distance. "What was that!?" I shakily stood up from the bed I was on. *How did I get here?* I looked around the barracks, seeing Lotus and Iron laying not far away. "Iron! Get up!" I ran over to his bed and shook him. When he didn't wake up I ran over to Lotus. "Get up Lotus!" Again, nothing happened. I backed away from the bed and ran to the doors, trying to walk straight as my vision faded in and out. "What....Oh I feel horrible." I fought back the vomit rising in my throat and pushed open the doors. I stood frozen for a second as I took in the broken castle and the streaks of fire across the forest. *What happened?* Stumbling forward, I tripped over something soft. I rolled over to see a familiar face laying on the ground, motionless.

"Moon?" I crawled over to her, trying to get a reaction. "Moon, are you-" My throat closed up when I saw the hole burned through her. "Moon!" I forced myself up just enough to fall towards her. "Oh no. No no no." I rubbed my hoof over her face, hoping to detect any sign of life. My eyes started to drift closed as I fought off a major headache. Just before they closed, I saw a blurry figure land beside another lump on the ground not far away. It was a black hippogriff, one I easily recognized. "Sapphire." I managed to

whisper out before fading into unconsciousness.

Author's Notes:

[Discord](#)

I'm not sure if I liked the way I ended this chapter or not. Tell me what you think in the comments. Fun fact, I was so so excited to start writing this chapter, that I almost slipped and killed myself in the shower.

Proofread by Kikataddell

Deserted

Third Person

Sapphire quickly ran around her room, grabbing things from her shelves as tears fell from her face. She didn't notice Celestia standing in the doorway, watching her. The stuff she was carrying fell to the the ground with a crash as Celestia cleared her throat.

"What are you doing Sapphire?" Celestia asked, already knowing the answer.

"I'm leaving." Sapphire began picking up the things she dropped. "I can't stay here. Not after...." She choked up, not able to continue.

"Where will you go?"

"East." She slipped some books into the bag laying on the bed.

"Maybe visit my relatives in the Griffin Empire. Someone needs to inform them of what has happened." She seemed to think for a moment as she continued to empty shelves. "Then...I don't know. I guess we'll see where life takes me." The latch on the bag closed with a click and she slid it onto her back. "I've already taken what I want from my mom's room. You can keep the rest." With that, she shoved past Celestia and disappeared down the hall. Celestia didn't move for a long time, simply staring at the now empty room. Then she fell to her knees and sobs filled the quiet halls.

Night Wing

An Icy trail led from the forest to the shattered remains of Starswirl's tower. I was at the end of the trail, simply sitting and staring up at the tainted moon. Craters now marred it's surface, ruining the clean whiteness it once had. I felt no emotion at the moment. The guards had already collected Moon's body, the other guards involved were in the hospital along with Celestia, and Sapphire was gone. And I....I was alone. Alone among the shattered remains of my old life. Countless magical artifacts surrounded me,

most broken but some preserved, however they provided no distraction.

And then, I felt angry. I knew who was responsible for this. My claws dug into the dirt and ice started spreading even further along the ground. *And I know how to deal with the person responsible.* I stood quickly and started slowly walking through the rubble of the tower. I levitated the Elements from where Celestia dropped them on the ground, having passed out after the fight, and drug them through the air beside me. I heard the soft sound of leathery wings beside me and the sound of hooves hitting the dirt. My head snapped around with a glare to see Silver stopped just behind me.

“Night....” She stopped and looked away from my gaze, down to the ground. “What do we do?” I saw so many emotions in her eyes as she looked back up to me.

‘I don’t know.’ With that I turned around and resumed my walk away from the castle.

“Sir!” Silver Wing called out to me. “You are the leader of the Lunar Guards! What should we do?” Then she went silent, waiting for my answer.

‘Not anymore.’ I looked over my shoulder just enough to see her in my peripheral. ‘You will have to find a new leader. I am no longer a Captain of the Guard.’ I faced forward once more, expecting her to leave. What I didn’t expect was the sound of her wing blades being opened. I turned to face her fully, One of her wings pointed to the side and the other toward me, while she stared at me with a mixture of anger, sadness, and exhaustion.

“Please. Don’t do this Night.” Tears started forming in her eyes as her wings wavered. “Don’t make me lose another friend tonight.” Then her wings dropped and she just stared at me hopelessly.

‘I can’t Silver.’ I turned to once more try and walk away, only for the sound of blades in dirt to stop me. Once more I turned around. Only this time Silver had her front legs bent and her chest to the ground. Her wings were so low, the blades were cutting into the ground.

“I, Silver Wing, Hearby declare-“

‘What are you doing Silver?’ I asked, confused. Not that she could see my writing.

“-That I, as well as all my descendants, will forever be in servitude to the one know as Night Wing, former captain of the Lunar Guard.” With that she rose us again, tears falling from her face. A small smile worked its way into her face. “There. Now you have to stay with me.”

I just stared at her blankly. ‘Go pack your things.’ She saluted with a small smile and took off to the castle. I huffed and finally continued my walk to a large cavern not far from the castle. My rage steadily grew as I got closer, but I fought to keep it contained. Dirt fell over the edge as I left claw marks in the small trail down into the cavern. The snaps and pops of heating ice were all around me as the earth started to freeze. A soft glow filled the cavern as I reached the bottom, almost creating a comforting atmosphere.

The glow came from a crystal tree peacefully sitting among the rocks. I calmly approached the tree and sat beside it, thinking about what I was about to do. *An eye for an eye*. With that thought I reached out and gently touched the surface. Instantly I was pulled into my mind, where the all too familiar Harmony greeted me. She had a sad look on her face, as if she felt sorrow for the events the happened just hours ago.

‘You can stop pretending Harmony. I know you meant for all this to happen.’

“That doesn’t mean I don’t feel bad about it Night. And you know you can talk like normal here.” She took a step toward me which her hand outstretched, but I took a step away. She frowned more but didn’t come any closer.

‘I don’t want to use my voice for you. It would be a waste.’ I glared at her. ‘You think you can do whatever you want to create the perfect world don’t you? You even erased my memories so I couldn’t help her.’

“I did what I had to. Luna wi-“

‘**Don’t** say her name. You don’t deserve to say it.’ Harmony just glared at me in response.

“She will be back in one thousand years. You know this. You can live forever, it’s not as if you won’t ever see her again.”

‘Do you know how ridiculous that sounds? Just how far are you willing to go for your vision of perfection!?’

“I don’t want to make a **perfect** world Night. I want to make a safe world. And I will go however far it takes.”

‘Well did you ever consider what would happen if you went too far with the wrong person?’ Ice was starting to spread across the nonexistent floor in my mind.

“What would happen Night? Would someone come after me? I’m the protector of this world, wha-“ Suddenly her voice cut off. She felt her throat for a moment, a look of surprise on her throat.

“Wha-“ Her voice stopped again. She turned a panic filled gaze to me. She mouthed words at me, but no words came out.

‘I suppose you’ll find out what happens **now**. But don’t worry, it’s only one thousand years.’ A cruel smile over took my face. Harmony struggled as the ice spreading across the ground reached her feet. It slowly crawled up her legs, then higher, enveloping her until she was completely incased. Then I was yanked back to reality. I looked down to see my claw imbedded in the now frozen crystal. I yanked my claws out of the crystal with disgust then made my way to the exit, dropping the Elements on the ground in front of the tree.

Author's Notes:

Discord

How was this chapter? Please, sate my appetite for comments. ***I HUNGER***. This chapter was looked at by Hunter Redflame

Traveling

The smell of the ocean was almost overbearing in the afternoon sun. I stood on the stern of the clipper I had just purchased, the crew consisting mainly of batponies that had decided it was no longer safe for them to stay in Equestria. As I was no longer captain of the Guard, I couldn't simply take a ship for awhile. Celestia had offered to pay for a ship, but I couldn't accept that. I had plenty of funds saved up over the years, so buying a ship was no problem. So the batponies and I left for a western port town and prepared to leave Equestria.

I flew down and stood on the shore beside Celestia, both of us looking out over the waves. "So...." Celestia's voice wavered. "You're leaving as well." I just leaned into her more instead of answering. "I can't do this alone Night. I'll be all alone."

'No you won't.' I layed my head across the back of her neck. 'You will always have me and Luna. Even if we aren't right beside you, we love you. And you can always look for me with the feathers I've left with you. Just as I can look for you.'

"It won't be the same!" Celestia broke down into my shoulder. "You won't be here with me anymore! You may not be related to me by blood Night, but I love you like a brother. You have always taken care of me and Luna, always comforted us and helped us through hard times. And now I'm going to lose you. Just like Luna."

'You are not going to lose me Celestia. You will never lose me. I will always find you if you are in trouble, no matter what. You are one of the only things that I have left.' I let a few tears of my own slide down into her fur, before I straightened up and dried my face with a wing. 'Now!' I forced a smile onto my face. 'I will see you again sister, no matter what.'

A voice called across the docks, signaling that the ship was ready to leave. "I suppose it's time for you to go." Celestia let a small smile onto her face. "Till we see each other again Captain Night Wing!" She gave me a tight hug, then pushed me toward the boat. I took to

the air and landed on the deck of the ship. I stood there and waved at the white mare as the ship began to drift away from the shore. I didn't stop waving until the shore was no longer visible.

"How are you?" Silver asked quietly beside me. Instead of answering I walked down to the main deck and entered the lower decks. My room was right beside the stairs, and while it was small compared to the castle I couldn't care less. The few things I had didn't take much room, and I managed to fit everything on the small wooden shelves stuck to the hull. A purple egg was the centrepiece, surrounded by other odd items I had collected. A bed took up the majority of the floor space across from the door, with a small desk to the right of the headboard. A mirror hung above the desk, the very same I helped make years ago. My wing blades were hung on the wall at the foot of my bed, crossed like swords, and my armor was piled in the corner with my ankle blades. The gentle rocking of the ship was lulling me to sleep as we headed west. The bed creaked as I lay down, letting my eyes close and hoping for a dreamless rest.

Four Days Later

I awoke to a loud CRRRRRAAAAAAACK!!! My bedroom door flew open as I raced up the stairs to the deck. Wind almost pushed me over as the deck door opened, rain coming down in waves. My claws dug into the slick deck as I made my way up to the helm. 'What is the situation?' I asked the helmspony.

"This storm came out of nowhere sir! Clear skies for miles, then suddenly this!" His voice barely reached my ears over the rain. A loud BOOM rattled the deck as thunder rolled across the ocean. "I can't navigate through this weather! I can barely see where we are going, we'll just have to wait it out!" Lightning struck the ocean near the ship, causing steam to rise from the boiling water.

'Do whatever you can to keep us afloat. I am going to make sure the cargo is secure.' I turned to go down to the main deck, but a sudden jerk made me tumble down the stairs. The sound of wood cracking filled my ears, and I groaned internally. *Will I ever get a break?* "CAAAY!" 'What did we hit!?'

"I think it was a reef sir. We need to find land quickly." The helmspony called out to me.

"Captain, we're taking on water!" A Batpony came up from below deck. I sighed once again and struggled to reach the bow of the ship through the wind and rain. We had hit a reef, so hopefully that meant land was somewhat close. I narrowed my eyes, trying to see through the rain. A rock pierced the fog to our left, too close to avoid, so I opened a portal over it and lowered it below the water. Once the ship went over it, I lifted the portal back up and the rock once again stood above the water.

"SHREEEEEEIIIIIIIII!!" My left wing snapped open as I let out a high pitched shriek. The helmspony turned the ship, narrowly missing a rock on our right. Then the sound of grinding sand met our ears and the ship shuddered to a stop. Then the rain petered away and the clouds receded from the evening sun. "KEEEEEEEE!!" I called out, and Silver thudded onto the deck beside me. I glared slightly as she saluted me, but let it slide. 'Get your weapons ready, I don't like this.' The sound of multiple weapons being drawn made me spin around. 'Really?' I drug my claw down my beak as the majority of the crew looked around sheepishly. All of the Batponies had their guard weapons drawn, and a few of the normal unicorns from the port had swords floating beside them.

'And why do you still have your guard weapons?' None of them looked me in the eyes.

"So we could serve you better Sir!" One of the Batponies in the back called out. I didn't bother answering and pushed through them to the door. *Im not a Sir anymore. Just a normal magic bird.* My grumbling filled the empty hall as I put on my armor and weapons. The armor had some dents in it from the recent events. I hadn't bothered to get them fixed before we left. I regretted that now as I put the chest piece on, the dents lining up perfectly to several sore spots. *Oh how the mighty have fallen.* A wince contorted my beak as I walked up the stairs, but I refused to heal myself or use any pain numbing spells.

"We are ready to scout the area Sir!" A dark red Batpony waited for me by the door.

‘What’s your name?’ I fixed him with a small glare as my eyes looked over his purple mane.

“Fie-Former Field Officer Strawberry Twist.” He winced at my glare, but held a salute as I stared at him strangely. “My parents liked berries.” He explained.

‘Don’t salute me anymore. I’m not the Captain of the Guard.’ I snorted and walked to where the ramp was being lowered.

“But you are the captain of this ship **Sir**.” I ignored his comment and motioned for several ponies to follow me, an even mix of Batponies and normal Ponies. Silver walked beside me as the four others followed us onto the beach. It was a rather small beach with a forest just feet away from the bow of the ship.

‘Check the hull damage and see if it’s fixable.’ I instructed a Unicorn and a Batpony. I turned to face the forest as they went around the ship looking for breaches. A thick mist was coiling between the trees, and dark shapes flitted around in the dark. ‘Silver, you and the others come with me. It’s time to meet our host.’ With that Silver, Strawberry, and the other pegasus followed me towards the woods.

“Shouldn’t we bring more ponies with us?” Strawberry nervously asked as we drew closer to the trees.

“They need to defend the ship, plus we don’t know what is in this forest. We are scouting the area.” The trees started groaning after Silver finished her explanation, and we stopped a few feet away from the tree line. The trees in front of us groaned and bent away while the underbrush slid to the side, creating a path into the mist.

“Uh, ma-maybe they need help with the rigging. I better go help them.” The pegasus with us tried to take off, but I grabbed him with my telekinesis and pushed him back to the ground.

‘They need no help with the rigging. Come on, let’s get this over with.’ I squashed any nervousness I had and stepped into the trees. The others followed behind me and we were covered by the mist just a few steps in. The canopy let little sunlight in so the mist was

dark and cold. I could barely see a foot in front of my face, and we almost ran into trees several times. My wing snapped out as a twig snapped beside me, only to hit air. Leaves rustled just out of our vision and shadows jumped around the fog. Suddenly a glow to my right made me throw up my wing. I covered it in a magic shield, but that did nothing to stop the golden bolt of energy that flew from the fog. “CAAAAW!!” Searing pain filled my wing as the ball of magic embedded itself in my flesh. Another flash behind me and Strawberry cried out.

I slung several ice blades into the forest with my good wing as I ran over to the injured Batpony. ‘Silver! To me!’ “Keee!” Silver and the pegasus ran over as I shot magic into the mist, aiming at whatever glow I saw. “CAAAAAAAAW!” Another spot of pain erupted on my back. I threw up a shield around us, trying to ignore the pain of moving. A glow appeared in front of us again and I watched in slow motion as the ball of magic shot out of the mist, hit my shield, and then went through it. The shot hit Silver on the shoulder, knocking her to the ground.

“AAAAAH!” Silver cried out and curled up on herself. *Enough!* I let out a pulse of freezing cold air, and the mist dropped like a rock as the water turned into snow and ice. What I saw made me pause just long enough to get hit again.

“KEEEEEAAARR!” Deer were bouncing through the woods around us, yelling in some language I couldn’t understand. Suddenly they all stopped and faced us. As one, their horns started to glow. *Oh crap.* I snapped my wings over the ponies, trying to shield them, and threw up another pointless shield. Beams of light erupted from each tip of their horns, filling the forest with thin golden lines. They hit my shield and stopped for just a moment, then continued through. “CAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!!” I tried opening a portal, but I couldn’t focus through the pain. All I could do was sit there as the light burned through me.

“JAKO!!” Someone called out, and the pain stopped. The golden light disappeared and I was left with the soreness of having holes all in your body. I opened my eyes and looked between my wings, hoping the ponies were okay. Nothing had changed with them, no more wounds than the ones they already had. I shuddered in pain

as I noticed I could see light shining through several thin spots in my wings, where the beams had almost burned through. I collapsed on one knee as leaves crunched beside me.

A deer was there, looking at me curiously. I glared up at him as blood loss finally started getting to me. "Ka lo pen!" The deer motioned over several others and I tried to stand once more to protect us.

'You will not harm them.' The words appeared very slowly, but startled the deer nonetheless.

"Ta! Io yapeth!" I saw the deer rush over now, and I tried to shoot anything at them. But I couldn't get the energy as my vision faded away and I collapsed on the ground. I simply glared up at the deer as I lost consciousness.

"GAAAAAAAAAAAH!" I woke with a gasp, sitting up only to fall back down in pain. *What the...*

"AAAH!!" The deer beside me jumped away and hit the wall. I tried to get up again, but a golden glow pushed me back down. I flinched away from the light, but it didn't really help considering it was surrounding me. "Don't scare me like that!" The deer gave me a slightly nervous glare. Then the glow disappeared and he walked back over to me. "I was about to undo your wrappings." My eyes drifted down my bandaged body, noticing a lack of searing pain. The deer's antlers lit up and the bandages came to life, moving like a snake as they unwrapped me and then crawled into a fireplace to be incinerated.

'Where am I?' I looked around the room, quickly noticing the others scattered around the room. Silver had bandages around her shoulder as she lay unconscious in a bed. Strawberry had bandages around his stomach and back. He, along with everyone else, was unconscious.

"You're in the local healing centre." The deer approached me cautiously. "I'm sorry for how you were wounded, but the warriors thought you were an evil beast in our forest." I yanked my wing

back as he tried to pull it out. "I'm just checking for any wounds." I relaxed slightly and let him stretch the sore skin out. "My name is Greenhorn. May I ask yours?"

‘Night Wing.’

“I must admit Night Wing, I have never seen or heard of your species before.” His horns lit up and I flinched as several feathers moved to expose my black skin.

‘What have you done to the crew on my ship?’

“Straight to the point.” He sighed heavily. “They are fine. Our warriors are guarding them in a few houses near the edge of town.”

‘So we are prisoners then?’

“Yes, you are. We don’t know what your purpose is here, and until we find out you will be under constant surveillance.” Greenhorn snorted.

‘Your bedside manner could use a little improvement there doc.’ I glared at him. I didn’t really expect anything else.

“Please, you should be thanking us. If we hadn’t pulled you from your ship when we did, you would all be dead within weeks.” Hoof steps echoed around the room as he shook his head.

‘What do you mean?’ I couldn’t think of anything in the ship that would do that.

“Ha! Your poor crew members must not have known what they brought on the ship when they found that changeling egg.” My eyes widened in horror. “Don’t worry.” Greenhorn tried to reassure me when he saw my expression. “It’s been take care of. The warriors took it to the burn pit along with the other trash. It’s probably been lit already.” He turned around to pull some bottles off a shelf. He didn’t get the chance to turn around. I forced magic to heal any wounds left inside me, and lunged forward. My claw wrapped tightly around his neck, the fur instantly freezing around it.

‘**Where!!**’ My eyes glowed a cool blue and Greenhorn gasped for

breath as he uselessly tried to pry my claw off with his hooves. As he slowly lost consciousness he pointed shakily out the door in a random direction. I looked and could just barely see smoke rising in the fading sun. *I won't lose another one.* I disappeared in a flash of light and left the breathless deer to collapse on the floor.

Third Person

A giant bonfire crackled in a clearing near the deer village, and many deer danced and sang around the fire. No one paid any attention to the small purple egg at the edge of the fire, where the flames were just starting to grow. Laughter and joy filled the air and children ran between the feet of several deer. Everything was perfect. Until a large flash of light and giant crack of displaced air filled the clearing.

“SHREEEEEEEEEEEE!!!” A giant bird colored like the night sky appeared. The torches surrounding the clearing were extinguished and ice spread across the forest floor. The flames of the bonfire slowed and turned solid as powerful magic turned them into ice. The few warriors in the clearing brandished spears, but they were cast aside with a wave of the avian's wings. Then it landed and slowly approached the now frozen flames. It slowly bent down and gently caressed the purple egg embedded in the ice. A small scorch mark covered a third of the egg, and as the bird noticed this the air grew colder.

‘Do you know what you have done?’ The crowd gasped and screamed as the words appeared all over the bird's body, where everyone could see them. He snapped his wings open and the ice shattered around the egg. It was lifted in a black aura to his eye level. Then he began floating up into the air as a black aura leaked from the edges of his eyes. ‘Do you know what you have done!?’ The air weighed heavily on everyone and they began shivering. Ice slowly began creeping up the legs of the closest deer. **‘If this egg does not survive then I promise you I will make whoever is responsible for this suffer!!!’** Then the bird was wrapped in a roiling mass of dark blue and black energy, before it collapsed in on itself and disappeared. The deer were all breathless as warriors rushed into the clearing, responding to the noise and terrified

shrieks.

Night Wing

I slowly approached the area where my crew were obviously being held. The guards pointed their spears at me, but I froze the tips so fast that they shattered and sprayed shards of sharp metal all over their bearers. Then they tried to shoot their golden beams of energy at me as I drew closer. They were met with a thick wall of ice between me and them. All I had eyes for was the black side of one of the few things I still cherished in life.

‘Where is your leader?’ The word appeared as the wall of ice dropped.

“You’ll never get aw-!!” One the deer tried to be a hero, only to get pulled into my claw. I merely gazed emotionlessly at him as my claw slowly tightened around his neck. His gasping didn’t even register as blood slowly dripped from around the end of my toes.

‘If your leader isn’t before me in thirty seconds, I start ending lives.’ I looked at them coolly as the deer in my grip was lowered to the ground with my claw still on his throat. I was now standing on his neck, severely restricting his air. About ten seconds of choking went by before a Deer with a huge rack of antlers stepped forward. ‘I assume you are the one who ordered this burned?’ I held up the egg.

“Yes, I am. I was ridding you and your crew of a beast that would have surely ended you all.” He snorted in anger. “If I had known you really were a monster I would have let it stay on your ship and kill you all.” I closed my eyes and resisted the urge to snap the neck under me. I released the Deer I was standing on, hearing him gasp below me.

‘And how is this egg a monster?’ My eyes snapped open. ‘What gives you the right to end a life that belongs to me!?’

“Please.” He snorted. “Those things are hardly alive. All they do is feast off the lives of others, taking what they don’t have to try and

make themselves feel whole. They have killed hundreds of our people. And you defend it? Clearly you are either insane or working with these dark creatures.”

‘I would choose your next words wisely.’ My wings flared out, stretching to their full length. ‘This egg was entrusted to me by my friend as she drew her last breath. And you had the gall to try and burn it.’

“Ha! Some friend! Giving you something that would grow up to kill you.” The Deer came closer to me, almost pushing his muzzle against my beak.

‘I’ll have you know, that friend was a changeling herself. And I helped defend her hive against changelings like the ones you have described. Unlike your changelings, these helped the kingdom I guarded. And I will not have their memory tarnished by your ignorance!’ I was fighting hard against the urge to kill him. I was beyond angry. I had already lost so much, and now I may have lost another.

‘You will release my crew to me, and we will leave. And **if** this egg survives, then I just **might** spare your life.’ I grabbed him in my magic and pulled him close, my forehead pressed against his. ‘But if this egg dies, then woe to you and the ones you love.’

He fell to the ground when my aura disappeared, seemingly in shock at how I had treated him. I looked at the other Deer, practically daring them to challenge me. They all nervously shuffled their hooves and looked away. My claws dug into the cold earth as I snorted and walked past them to the small huts containing my crew.

Author's Notes:

[Discord](#)

Greenhorn is an Oc provided by Hunter Redflame

So begins Night Wing’s life away from Equestria.
Sorry this took so long to get out. I finally managed

to write it out though, tell me how it is.

This chapter looked over by Hunter Redflame,
kitkataddel, and ArceusFan493.

As always, your comments feed me. And I am very
hungry.

Piracy

The door in front of me shattered into a million pieces as I walked up to it. The ponies inside looked up in shock at my rather violent entrance. ‘Let’s go, we are leaving.’ I spun around and repeated the process with the other two buildings. A confused Batpony left the crowd and approached me hesitantly.

“What happened Sir?” He looked over at the Deer guards glaring towards our group. “They seemed rather peaceful, aside from keeping us contained.”

‘They overstepped their bounds, and I corrected their actions.’ I faced forwards as we approached the medical hut. ‘Return to the ship with the others. I will be there shortly.’ The Batpony saluted, much to my annoyance, before running off and instructing the other to follow him. As he led the others away, I knocked on the door of the apothecary.

“Who is i-!” Greenhorn swung open the door, only to freeze when he saw me. “*You!!*” He yanked open the door and approached me angrily. “You think you can just throw me around in my **own home!?**” He poked me in the chest. I brushed him aside with my wing and forced my way into his home. Greenhorn spluttered by the door as I made my way to the tables that held Silver and Strawberry. I looked over their bandages for a second before laying my wings on them both. With a pulse of power, and a gasp from them both, they sat up and I took their bandages off. I was breathing deeply, I had used a lot of energy throughout the day.

“What happened?” Silver rubbed the sleep from her eyes as she tried to wake up fully. I just leaned forward and hugged her with my wings. “Night? What happened?”

‘We are going back to the ship. There is nothing for us here. I will explain more fully once we are back on the water.’ I pulled away and helped her off the table. Berry slid off his table and followed us to the exit, a confused look on his face. I merely glanced at the guards holding Greenhorn back outside. Silver and Berry stopped

for a second before following me with worried looks. As we approached the village, Deer scattered ahead of us while we made our way around houses and toward the forest. Until a lone fawn stopped us.

“Mossy!” I heard a mother cry out somewhere, before another Deer, obviously the fawn’s mother, ran up and stood protectively over her child. While the mother was glaring at me, the child peaked out with a look of amazement on her face.

“Are you here to help us?” The small deer asked me innocently. “You must be here to help us from the pirates, you have a big ship like them, but you didn’t burn down our homes.”

“Come on honey, let’s leave them alone.” The mother pulled her daughter away into the crowd. I followed them with my head as the daughter looked back at me hopefully. My thoughts were in an uproar. On one hand, I was angry at the Deer. On the other, children and families were getting hurt. I was wronged by one of them, not all of them. I groaned out loud, attracting the attention of both batponies with me.

‘Get to the ship, I will be there soon. Get it in the water for when I return.’ Then I took off into the sky and headed in the direction of Greenhorn’s house. It was hard to spot underneath the sea of green that was the forest, but I managed to glimpse it in a small clearing. I dropped down below the leaves, trailing bits of greenery behind me as I descended. The guards were still there talking amongst themselves, though the leader wasn’t there thankfully. Several racks of antlers lit up with gold as I landed, though none fired at me.

“What is your business here bird? Begone, we have bigger problems to deal with here.” One of the soldiers said as he approached me.

‘Such as?’

“None of your concern, now leave before we reduce your ship to rubble.”

‘Do you have much practice with that? I’ve heard mention of pirates in this area.’ I raised an eyebrow. ‘How have you managed to

survive their attacks on your people so well?’ The guard glared at me before sighing heavily and losing the sharp look in his eyes. It was, instead, replaced with a tired one.

“We haven’t. Hundreds have been killed by their raids. We simply don’t have the ability to stop them all. And our scouts have spotted one of their larger fleets headed this way.” He growled and kicked at the dirt.

‘Hmmm. I see.’ I looked toward the ship and prepared to take off. ‘I’ll see what I can do.’ I shot up and looked behind me to see an enraged guard on the ground.

Twisted Limb

“How dare he!” I spun around in rage. “GREENHORN! Get out here!” The medic rushed out to me. “That insufferable bird has taken it upon himself to try and take care of our problem. Go stop him from his foolishness. He has no reason to be dealing with our problems.”

“What!? I’m busy here! Send a guard!” Greenhorn looked offended at the request. Twisted sighed and rubbed his temple with a hoof.

“Just go! You’re the only Deer I can spare. I need all the soldiers here, preparing for battle.”

“Dang it Limb, I’m a Potion Maker! Not a diplomat!” He turned around and started muttering to himself as he walked into the woods. I rolled my eyes as I turned around and started planning our strategy with the other Guards.

Greenhorn

I muttered angrily to myself while stomping through the woods towards the beach. I was close to the shore by now, and I could hear the shouts and hollers of a ship getting ready to sail. All the animals had surely been scared from the area by these interlopers.

My job is to make potions, not settle arguments between different

creatures. My hooves crushed plants angrily as I worked out my frustrations while I walked. My potion making was known well among the Deer, and while I wasn't the best, I certainly wasn't the worst. I had chosen to pursue potion making for a reason. I preferred the solitude of working with plants and other ingredients, rather than the nervousness of working with other Deer.

The dirt transitioned into sand as the trees thinned out suddenly. I paused and took a deep breath when their ship came into view. The sight of so many creatures, combined with the familiar sight of a large wooden ship forced me to stop dead in my tracks.

Here we go... My legs jerkily moves forward for a moment before smoothing out as I approached the vessel. I almost jumped back when several bat winged ponies landed in front of me.

"What is your business Deer?" One of the ponies had shining blades on his wings and a stern glare fixated on me.

"I- " I had to clear my throat and find my voice again before continuing. "I have come with a message from Twisted Limb, second in command of our Warriors."

"Let's hear it then." The Batponies listened expectantly.

"Well it's-it's for Night Wing." My composure was slowly breaking. *I hate talking to Deer...Ponies....whatever.*

"One second." The Batpony raised his head and let out a high pitched squeal. A moment later a female Batpony landed beside them.

"What's happening here?" She was in full armor, with a serious expression on her face.

"Officer Silver, Deer has a message for Captain Night Wing." The Batpony quickly answered and saluted Silver.

"I see. And why should I allow you to see Captain Night? Your people almost destroyed something precious to him." Silver approached me and pushed her hoof against my chest trying to make me stumble. I may be shy, but I certainly wasn't a pushover.

"I'm just doing what I was commanded to do." I answered angrily. "I don't particularly like your Captain, he choked me in my own home! Yet here I am, trying to convince him not to risk his life." Silver snorted at my tone.

"You don't know Night like I do. He won't stop because you ask him. He sees someone in trouble and does his best to help, even if they hurt him." She looked over her shoulder at the ship. "Grab him, we'll take him onboard. He can give his message and leave."

"Excuse me? What do you me-AAH!" I panicked as the ground fell away from me. "Let go of me!"

"Are you sure?" One of the ponies lifting me up laughed. "It's a long drop." They all shared a laugh at my expense before gently setting me on the deck of the ship. Ponies with wings, horns, and neither of those, rushed around pulling ropes and moving barrels. I had never been on a ship before, so all the sounds and sights were new to me.

"Caw!" I turned around only to come face to face with Night. "Why are you on my ship?" The large bird clearly wasn't happy with me.

"I have a message from Twisted Limb, second in command of our Warriors. He does not want you to attack the pirates. This is our fight not yours." I stood straight and confident, even though I was trembling on the inside. It didn't help that every single pony had stopped to stare at me. After a moment, the noise resumed as Ponies resumed working.

'No.' He turned away from me and resumed walking around the deck. I was about to say something when his back filled with letters. 'Obviously you need help with these pirates, and while some of your people wronged me....not all of them did.'

"But you have no right to meddle in our affairs for no reason!"

'You meddled in my affairs. There you go, I have a reason.' He dismissed me casually while looking at the cannons on the deck. I seethed as I tried to contemplate how to best go about my assignment. I didn't have much time to consider it.

“Captain! Ships approaching!” A feathered Pony flew by quickly. Night spun around and I followed his gaze to the horizon. There, several ships could be seen. It looked like about six of them. They most likely had several hundred bloodthirsty pirates on board, just waiting to spill blood.

“KEEEAR!!!” Night Wing called out. Silver called out right after.

“ALL HANDS ON DECK!! LET’S GET THIS SHIP IN THE WATER!!!” The few ponies not on the boat flew, or were flown, up off the beach. Then, somehow, the ship fell **through** the sand and dropped into the water.

“How...” I looked around, and saw no one else was surprised by this. Then the situation caught up with me. “Wait! Take me back to shore!” I had no interest in being in this battle. One ship versus six, it was suicide.

‘Too late now Greenhorn. I need all ponies here.’ Several of the flying ponies gathered behind the sails and started flapping air into them. The ponies with neither wings or horns pushed cannons into place and lifted heavy metal balls into them. The few with horns were levitating ropes around, making sure the rigging was functioning properly.

“What!? But I-“

“Hush!” Silver yelled at me. “I can’t focus with your complaining. Go below deck if you’re scared!”

Night Wing

I glanced over as Silver yelled at the Deer, but quickly refocused on the ship rapidly approaching us. Wood clacked under my claws as I made my way up to the Helm. ‘When we are within range, face our cannons to them. I want to hit them from as far off as possible.’ The helmspony nodded and tensed up. I couldn’t help but feel nervous about the upcoming battle. I had never fought ship to ship. I cast my worried gaze over the deck, hoping we wouldn’t lose too many.

The ship creaked in the breeze as we drew closer. The deck was silent enough to hear the flaps of the Pegasi and Batponies above us. Then, with a jerk, the wheel spun around. Things slowed down as cannons were brought to bear upon distant wood, Unicorns lit fuses, and Earthponies braced to hold the cannons from slinging back. Then, time resumed with a BOOOOOM! The cannons spit fire and metal across the water at high speeds, just as the pirates were spinning their ships around to return fire. A distant crack signaled metal hitting wood, but I didn't see any damage. Then the return fire came.

Now it's my turn. As their cannons fired I raised a shield between us and listened to the satisfying clangs of the cannon balls being blocked.

"FIRE!" A Unicorn lit the fuses once more and another BOOM echoed across the waves. Then a second. And a third. The other ships had begun firing now, all aimed for us.

'Angle us to get closer!' The wheel turned slightly and it seems the other ships had the same idea. We were all slowly closing in on each other. Another round of cannonballs hit my shield when suddenly a Griffin dropped from the sky.

"HAHA!! DIE!!" He swung his sword at a surprised Earthpony braced against a cannon. A gurgle rang out as his sword slit the Pony's throat, then he moved on to the swing at another. Until a Pegasus swung behind him and removed his head with a bladed wing. I snapped my head up as more black specks dropped from the clouds.

"KKEEEEEEAR!!!" I saw a few specks swerve when I cried out, but they quickly corrected their course.

"Boarders!!!" Silver cried out and rushed up into the air alongside the other flyers to neutralize the threat before it reached the ship. The ships grew closer and they still didn't show much damage. I was getting angry. Our ship loosed another volley of hot metal at them. Wood splintered under metal, but it wasn't enough. Even if we sunk one, we would have five more to sink.

The overwhelming odds just fueled my rage more. *Why can't anything go good for once!?* Dead Griffins and a few ponies fell onto the deck, and I couldn't take it anymore. I pushed my magic out and into one of the cannon balls. I pushed magic into it until I couldn't fit any more.

"FIRE!!" This time, when the cannons went off, one had a bright blue trail of magic and frost behind it. And when it hit...the damage was immediately obvious. Wood froze and shattered instantly as ice spread up the side rapidly. I heard panicked screams as icy spears grew from their deck. The other ships paused their firing, and the Griffins in the air paused for a second, before both began again. Several Griffins approached the deck, sword drawn. I grabbed them in a black aura and smashed them into paste as my anger grew.

Wouldn't even be here if it wasn't for those stupid Deer! I charged a whole volley of cannon shots with magic this time. When they were fired, the other ship finally went down. Ice spread across the whole thing as loud snaps filled the air. Anyone standing on the ship was frozen, before shattering with the ship.

Wouldn't be even be with the Deer if Luna was still here!! I took off from the deck and raced toward the second pirate ship. Frost followed me as I raced through the air. I landed on the deck with a thud.

"Kill that piece of Trash!" The Griffin I assumed to be the Captain called out as his crew rushed at me. I blocked a sword with my wing blade then used my other wing to remove the limb holding it. Then I headbutted another Griffin who rushed at me. A Minotaur swung a big axe at me, but I opened a portal in front of it. He looked up confused as the head of his battleaxe disappeared. Then, with a SHINK, he fell forward with the axe in his back. I threw my right wing back and froze a Griffin as it hit his head. Then I grabbed him and shattered him, pelting the others with the dagger like pieces of their frozen friend. I let my anger out, dodging and weaving through the weapons, wreaking havoc on the crew. I slowly made my way up to the helm, where the Captain was. As I dispatched his last crew member, he stared at me in horror. I was covered in blood and ice, with black magic leaking from my eyes.

“Wha-What **are** you!?” The Griffin fell down as he backed away from me. What disturbed him the most was my smile.

‘Your end.’ Then I grabbed his sword and ran it through him, into the wood below. I felt amazing, letting out my anger. And I had so much more to give...

Ice began spreading out around me, engulfing the ship. Wood cracked and shattered as water began rushing in. I took to the air just as it collapsed in on itself. I cast my gaze on the next ship. This time I didn’t land on the deck, I simply launched myself towards the cabin on the back. I covered myself in a shield and burst through the wood. Then I continued on through the other wall. As I smashed onto the deck, wood pelted the crew. I saw that they were about to fire their cannons, so I plugged them all with portals. With a deafening BOOOOOM hunks of metal flew up through the floor at random angles, obliterating half the crew. Icicles erupted from the deck and stabbed the ones left alive. *One more down.*

Silver Wing

I grappled with a Griffin in the air as we both fell, before slicing his wings off and pushing him away from me. Another one quickly tried to take his place, but I dodged to the side and he hit blade instead of flesh. The cries of battle echoed all around me. Cannons fired, creatures screamed, and lives were ended. Yet something out of place caught my ear. Laughter.

Laughter echoed around the battlefield, cold and insane. I spun around and saw something I never thought I would see. Three ships were now nothing but debris, and soon to be a fourth. Night Wing was on the fourth ship, and the laughter was coming from him. I watched as he destroyed the crew, using their own weapons to pin them to the decks and masts, not always killing them. Some of them simply hung screaming there as ice consumed them. Then, the hull started collapsing under some unseen pressure. Ice shot away from the hull and pierced into the hull of the fifth ship. For a second nothing happened. Then spears of ice exploded out from below the deck, obliterating both ships. All the while, Night laughed at the destruction.

Panicked shrieks signaled all the remaining Griffins being seized midair and dragged back down toward our ship. I raced down and touched the deck just as Night did. The Griffins were being held midair in front of Night as he looked at them like a predator eyeing meat.

“Night!” I shouted. I ran up to him, trying to stop him from doing whatever he was planning on doing. He glanced at me for a moment, but went back to watching the Griffins. Then they started to lower towards the water. By now, the blood had attracted sharks, and fins were circling in the water. The Griffins’ screams grew louder as they realized what was going to happen.

“Night Wing!” I looked to the descending avians. They had done bad things, but they didn’t deserve this. “Captain!!”

A shark jumped up and grabbed one of the Griffins close to the water. His screams were cut short as he was dragged under.

“NIGHT WING!!” Nothing.

CRUNCH.....then silence, aside from the Griffins still floating. They had stopped descending at least.

‘Did you just break my beak Silver?.....’ I stared in shock at Night’s cracked mouth. Then he looked around like he was seeing things for the first time. ‘I’m sorry you all had to see that.’ He shook his head. Then, with a resounding CRACK, the remaining Griffins fell dead in the water. ‘They don’t deserve that kind of death, even if they have done horrible things.’

“Caw!” ‘Let’s get back to shore! We need to drop this Deer off at his home.’ No one moved, all eyes were focused on him. ‘MOVE!’ That got them moving as nervous chatter filled the ship.

I didn’t know what to think. The Night I knew would never act so.....uncaring. Even if they were just pirates, and his actions were justified, it still worried me. I could see the same worry in the other former guards and slight fear among the rest of the crew. I wasn’t sure what to do. I wasn’t sure if there was anything I **could** do. I just had to keep a close eye on him and make sure he didn’t do anything he would regret. Night was one of the only friends I had

left, and I didn't want to lose him too.

Author's Notes:

[Discord](#)

Hunter Redflame, ArceusFan493, and kitkataddel did a read over on this chapter and helped me fix a few flaws with the writing.

As always, feed me your thoughts. I'm trying to get this thing finished! Sorry for all the slow updates.

Sea Sick

Third Person

A stunned deer watched from the trees as the strange bird's ship turned away from the shattered remains of their enemy. As it began to approach the shore, the scout ran back into the woods shouting for Twisted Limb.

Night Wing

My eyes narrowed at the lines of deer on the forest edge. Our ship was anchored just outside of the reef, safe from the deer. The egg was safe in my room, that was the important part. The sand shifted under my feet as Silver and I approached the deer, with Greenhorn between us. Two familiar deer stood in front. One attracted my anger more than the other.

"Twisted Limb. Crooked Branch." Greenhorn nodded to each.

'So, that's your name.' I approached the one who ordered the burning of my egg. 'I won't forget it.' I was face to face with him now, glaring into his eyes. I turned to look at Twisted Limb, not sure of my feelings towards him. In the end I just nodded and turned back towards the sea. 'We brought your messenger back. Now we shall depart, and pray that we never have the displeasure of meeting with you again.' I motioned for Silver to follow me as I took to the air, but I was stopped by Crooked.

"Wait!" He called out. I gritted my beak, wincing as the new crack flared with pain. "I owe you my thanks." I turned back towards them and motioned for him to continue. "Though I do not agree with the creatures you associate with, I can not ignore the service you have provided us. For that, you have my thanks. Please, take Greenhorn with you. He will prove useful I am sure."

Greenhorn gawked at him for a second before opening his mouth to retort. I flinched when Twisted Limb's antlers lit up, but he only

grabbed Greenhorn by the horns and pulled him aside. I don't think he realized I could hear them when he started whispering.

"Listen Green, we can't afford to leave him unsupervised. You saw what he did to those pirates. We need to make sure he doesn't do the same to us! Just...send us updates on him. Make sure he doesn't plan on attacking us." Twisted Limb tried to convince Greenhorn.

"Twisted, once again, I. am. a. doctor! Not a soldier, or a messenger, or a spy! A doctor! I have a home and business here! I can't go on some wild adventure! Send someone else."

"You're going, whether you like it or not Green. The only way we can be sure He won't attack us, is if we send someone with him. And I don't think he would accept a soldier going with him." Twisted Limb stood tall over Greenhorn and thrust a bag I hadn't seen into his chest. "Now go! I will watch over your things until you return." Greenhorn glared at both of the leaders, but walked over to me anyways, resigned to his fate.

"Now!" Crooked Branch grabbed everyone's attention. "We bid you farewell." With that, all the deer except Greenhorn leaped away into the trees with barely a sound.

"Well? Let's go already." Greenhorn grumbled while walking down the sandy beach. I rolled my eyes as a black aura appeared around him and spun him around.

'Do you think we are going to walk out to the ship?' I opened a portal beside me, showing the deck of the ship. Silver hopped through first, leaving me and Greenhorn on the beach. 'I'm not happy about you going with us either. I would much rather you stay here. Just don't cause any trouble, and we won't have any issues.' Greenhorn snorted derisively before stepping through. He stumbled for a moment at the change of scenery, but regained his footing. I stepped though behind him and let loose a sigh that attracted the attention of everyone around me. I motioned a unicorn over to me with a wave while pointing to the only deer on the ship. 'Show him to a room please. I am going to rest.' With that, I turned and went below deck, the wood creaking around me.

I opened my door only to find Silver waiting for me Inside. ‘Yes Silver? I’m very tired.’ She hesitated for a moment before answering.

“I...just wanted to make sure you are ok.” A grimace crosses her face. “I stepped out of line earlier.” Her eyes darted down to my beak for a split second.

‘It’s ok Silver. I’m glad you stopped me. I lost control for a moment and I needed to be stopped. But I really do need to rest now.’ She looked down and nodded at the clear dismissal. Without another word she squeezed by me and disappeared down the hall. I shut the door and flopped down on my bed face first. Then I got on it properly as a purple orb floated over to me from the nearby shelf. It slowly rotated in the air as I stared at it’s almost unmarred surface, lost in thought.

Silver Wing

I was sprawled haphazardly across my small bed. The steady rocking of the ship did nothing to ease my mind. *Why do I feel like this?* My head hurt and my chest had a tightness that I was unfamiliar with. I couldn’t stop thinking about Night. He was the only stable thing in my life now. He was my rock. And seeing him in that battle....it physically hurt to see him like that. He was my friend, and my friend never acted cruelly like that. *He’s just stressed. Ever since Luna....things have been hard. Especially for him.*

When Luna was banished, I lost my friend and ruler. Night lost his sister. I knew it would effect him and me. I just didn’t know it would hurt so bad to see Night effected. Why did it hurt so bad? We were close, yes, but we were just friends....right? I mean, we had grown closer over time. From the time we first met, to now, we had trained together. Fought together, explored together, and laughed together. Shared secrets and experiences that most others didn’t know. We risked our lives for each other many times, including recently on the island. But we weren’t, *couldn’t*, be close enough for me to hurt for him this much. On paper Night was still my superior and I was in his employment, and outside of that we were just friends.

“Right?”

Greenhorn

I grumbled as I unpacked the bag Twisted have given me. It had some medical supplies, though not many. Some potions that enhanced healing speed, a few burn salves, and miscellaneous herbs thrown in haphazardly. I put the potions and salve containers on the shelves on the wall, then assaulted the wall viciously with the bag. “I’m a medic! Not a spy! Not an explorer, or a soldier, or some sailor!” The abused bag fell to the floor along with my body as my eyes watered. “I just want to go home. I want to heal deer, not go on crazy adventures.” The bed creaked as I hauled myself into it. The steady rocking of the ship was starting to get to me as I closed my eyes, trying to ease the nausea. “I had nausea medicine back at home....”

Night Wing

What am I even doing? I was staring into my mirror, observing the new crack on my beak. *We set sail with no direction. A ship without a purpose. Just drifting through the sea until we hit land.* My thoughts kept drifting back to the small deer child asking for help. It hadn’t even been a week, and I already missed being captain of the guard. I missed protecting people, and seeing smiles from those who were reassured by my presence. *Why can’t I still do that?* I glanced over at my blades and began to smile. My thoughts went to the pirate ships disintegrating beneath me. The sense of relief that came from sinking my claws into flesh. I knew those thoughts weren’t normal, but it was so very tempting. *They’re pirates. Murders and slavers. I’m just doing the world a favor.* My armor floated over and I looked at the dents lining the chest piece. Then I put it back on the floor. I had a deer to find.

Third Person

The deck of the ship was alive as ponies ran back and forth. Ropes were tied, untied, and retied somewhere else. The overall mood was

nervousness. The former guards were worried for Night, and the others were worried for their safety. Nevertheless they all had a job to do. Keep the ship running smoothly until their next set of orders. The sun was beginning to set and plans were being set in motion. They were only days away from Equestria. There was still a whole world to explore.

Author's Notes:

Oh. My. God. The struggle to write this chapter. It probably sucks, and I'm not going to even put it through a proofread. I've made you guys wait long enough. Sorry for the wait, I have had ABSOLUTELY no desire to write recently, but I powered through it finally. Let me know what you think of this short slice of life chapter.

[Discord](#)

Marine March

Night Wing

I knocked on Greenhorn's door loudly before pushing it open. The deer was pitifully spread across the bed, barely raising his head as I entered. "What is it?" He mumbled irritably. "Can't you see I'm trying to wallow in misery here?"

'I need your help.' I grimaced as the words scrawled across my feathers. My cracked beak hurt from the expression, which just made me grimace more. It was painful enough just asking the deer for help.

"You need my help? Looks like miracles do exist. I thought you were some all powerful, all knowing bird! Sure didn't seem to mind pushing me and others around to get what you wanted." The deer glared up at me, anger evident on his face,

'Don't make this harder than it already is. I want your help to find what caused you deer so much trouble. The pirates.'

"Well maybe I don't **want** to help you with that! You've done nothing but ruin my life so far, so why would I just give you what you want?" He stood up now, pushing his face into mine. My eyes narrowed and I almost shoved him back. *Be nice. He just had to leave home. Both of us are mad, and I need his help.* I clenched my claw, fighting the urge to lash out. Then I spun around and left the room. I would ask him again later. I needed to check on the state of the ship and make sure everyone was doing okay.

As I stepped out onto the deck a awkward quietness fell over everyone. Heads turned to look at me. Familiar faces showed worry, and strangers showed fear. I looked around before nodding and heading up to the helm. Strawberry was there, keeping the ship on course. Or keeping it straight anyways, as we didn't have a course. 'How are things going?' I nodded to him and he nodded back.

"Good so far. The repairs we made on the island are holding, and

we have had a steady wind.”

‘Where did you learn sailing?’

“Uh, my parents made me do sailing lessons. Nothing like this, but I know how to keep a wheel straight.” He looked over at me. “Are things...ok with you?” He winced as he said it and looked back to the ocean.

‘Well, I don’t feel the urge to feed anyone to sharks right now so.....’ I attempted to joke, but it fell flat into an awkward silence. ‘Anyways.’ I cleared my throat. ‘I should have a course for you at some point in the near future.’ His ears perked up at that.

“An actual heading!? I mean, yes sir!” He snapped a salute and grinned at me. “Whenever your ready sir!” I glared at him for a second before walking away with a huff.

‘I’m feeling that urge again.’ I wrote across my back. The nervous shuffling behind me made me crack a small smile. It quickly disappeared when the crack in my beak ground against itself. *This sucks.*

Silver Wing

I groaned as a particularly large wave rocked the ship and shook me awake. A bad taste filled my mouth as I struggled to pull myself out of bed. My stomach rumbled with the wood of the ship and I realized I hadn’t ate in a full day. I had just been too busy. I headed down to the galley, my head still plagued with thoughts of a certain bird. Not many ponies were in the small galley, and not much food was prepared. Just some left over biscuits and water. I trudged by the counter, half asleep, and scooped up a biscuit and a mug. A quick stop at the water barrel, and I was sitting at one of the few tables. I slowly nibbled on my biscuit, ears falling as I silently wished for some fruit. The table shifting made me look up, and my ears perked up as I saw Night perch on the bench across from me. He looked down at me, the new crack in his beak drawing my attention.

‘Good evening Silver.’ My face grew hot for a second before I forced myself to regain my composure. *Get a hold of yourself Silver.*

“Hey Night. How are you feeling?” I smiled awkwardly as I tried to pretend nothing had happened earlier. Night looked at me for a moment before chuckling in his avian way.

‘You’re bad at this Silver. We both know that not everything is ok. I want to thank you again.’ He gave a small smile before wincing and going back to a neutral expression. I winced as I saw the flash of pain across his face.

“What are you thanking me for?”

‘This.’ He pointed with a wing to the crack going down his beak. ‘You reminded me that I’m not above losing control. That I have to be more careful than others.’

“Night...I.....”

‘It’s fine Silver. Don’t apologize for doing the right thing.’ SLAM! The deer, Greenhorn, walked by the table quickly and slammed a notebook down with a golden glow before walking back out of the galley angrily. I glared and stood up to scold him, when a dark glow pushed me back down. I looked back to Night questioningly. ‘Don’t, he’s been through a lot today. Besides, he gave me what I wanted.’ Night flipped around the notebook he was looking in revealing a map. ‘Now we have a heading’.

Strawberry Twist

To say I was relieved was an understatement. The sun was going down, which was nice, and we finally had a heading! I had felt a bit stupid sailing directionless. I wasn’t a seasoned sailor, so the thought of aimlessly sailing the sea indefinitely didn’t feel right to me. No one was sure where we were going, but everyone was relieved that Night seemed to be happier. An upset captain made for an upset crew. Night didn’t like for us to call him sir or Captain, but, no matter what he wanted, he would always be the Captain of the former guards. We didn’t have anyone left except ourselves. Our

short time of being accepted by the other ponies was welcome, but had to end eventually. It always did. We were just too different.

Thankfully, our heading was taking us away from the volcanic lands that the flyers had spotted to the south. Batponies liked cool and dark, not sweltering and bright. It was taking us more north. Already the air was starting to get cooler, which was a relief to much of the crew. Supposedly the destination was only a few days away. But I wasn't experienced at reading the stars, I just knew how to turn the wheel. The navigator gave me the heading, and I went that way. A smile crossed my face as I thought of what would be there. I just wanted to help people again.

Night Wing

I was lying in my bed, half asleep, when my wing started tingling. I shook myself awake and looked at it curiously. I focused on it for a second, and the background changed to show a familiar white face. 'Celestia!' I grinned widely. CAW! *Bad idea!* I cringed and covered my beak with a wing.

"Night! How are you doing!?" Celestia looked excited to see me. "I know it's only been a few days but I just couldn't wait any-what happened to your face!?" *Crap.*

'Uh.....I fell..' I smiled nervously at her, without the smile. So, I just looked generally nervous.

"You fell?"

'Yes. Hard. On a hard surface.' If I was still human I would be sweating. Thankfully I didn't sweat anymore. That would be horrible with feathers.

"Huh." Celestia looked at me with an expression that was completely unimpressed. "So besides falling, how have you been?"

'Good, good!' I was relieved to move on and gave half smile. That was all I could manage. 'How have you been?' I missed her just as much as she missed me. We hadn't been apart like this in awhile.

“Just restructuring the government and stopping angry citizens from killing eachother.” She chuckled awkwardly before a frown took over her features. “Honestly, I’m not doing that well Night. Are you sure you don’t want to come back?” I visibly recoiled as I thought about going back. The images of a broken castle and dead friends flashed through my mind.

‘I’m sorry, I just can’t.’ I looked down, ashamed.

“I understand.” Celestia whispered. “I wish I could have left with you. But everypony looks up to me, and I couldn’t leave them. But anyways, how are things wherever you are? Knowing you, you have already had some grand adventure!” She put on a shallow smile. “I want to know everything about it!” Thoughts of burning pain, icy storms in a deer camp, and dying pirates filled my head.

‘It’s....been pretty boring here. We haven’t had anything exciting happen.’

“Oh...” Celestia looked disappointed. “Well, that’s not bad I guess!” She gave me a small smile. “I’m glad your doing well Night. I need to head to bed, I have a full day of court tomorrow. Good night.” Then she faded from view. I fell back onto my bed with a thud. *I’m sorry Celestia.*

Author's Notes:

Heya people. I’m not dead (though some of you might wish it so with these few updates) I’m sorry for not updating guys. I know it seems like I’m not, but I really am. This is not dead! I just.....am slow. This is mainly just filler, with some foreshadowing.

No proofreaders this time, so expect errors. If you find mistakes, let me know in the comments.

[Discord](#)

Icy Seas

Three Days Later

Strawberry Twist

Careful What you wish for. I mentally scolded myself as my breath fogged in front of me. I had wanted cooler temperatures. Just not this cold. I winced as I pulled my hoof away from the wheel and rubbed it against my fur, trying to warm it. Chunks of ice had started to appear around the ship earlier in the day and all the Pegasi scouts had been called in to prevent frost bitten wings. Several Unicorns were positioned strategically across the deck, their horns glowing and emitting heat, trying to stave off the cold. It had been three days since we had gotten our heading. The crew was in high spirits, despite the cold, and excitement for what we would find there caused rumors and crazy theories to spread around the ship. *I can't believe Wind Sprinter thinks we are going to find some mountain of riches.* I laughed quietly to myself as I thought of my fellow former Guards.

“Berry! Your time is up! My turn to freeze my tail off...” My replacement helmspony grumbled to himself irritably. The brown Unicorn grabbed the wheel in their golden magic as I backed away, holding it steady while we transitioned.

“Thanks. Try not to freeze out here.” I heard and felt his horn start emitting heat as I turned around to go down the stairs and get some food below deck. *Fortunate Unicorns. Got their horns to keep them warm.* Waving a wing at some random crew members, I passed through double doors under the helm that lead into the ship's interior. A few ponies sat in the small parlor that was right through the doors, trying to warm up after or before their deck shifts. I ignored them as I went to the stairs on the other end of the room and descended into the galley. The stairs came down in the middle of the back wall, with Night's room on the right, and the kitchen on the left. A walkway was clear of tables all the way to the front wall, where three doorways lead to all the crew rooms.

I ignored all that in favor of the Unicorn mare standing in front of the food bar on the left side. She was sitting in a chair, reading a book, as she kept a pot of oatmeal warm with her magic. She hardly looked up as I approached, quickly looking back down and turning a page of her book. I got a bowl and mug while using the ladle to scoop some oatmeal into my bowl with a wing. "Thanks." The Unicorn hummed a response out as she kept reading. A quick stop by the water barrel, and I chose a seat at a table in the front right corner.

Oh this is so good.... I moaned out loud as I took a bite of the warm oatmeal. It didn't taste great, but the warmth was amazing. Even here, below the deck, it was chilly. Unicorns could only do so much about the temperature without wearing themselves out.

Just as I pulled the spoon out of my mouth, I saw a sight straight from a nightmare approaching me. Silver trudged up to my table, bags under her eyes, hair a complete mess, and her wings slightly uneven. With a thud she let her head hit the table as she slid into a chair across from me. "You look like you died and came back to life." I commented before taking another bite of oatmeal. Her head shifted to the side slightly so one eye could glare up at me.

"I **feel** like I died and came back to life." Silver's head slowly left the table as she eyed my bowl of oatmeal hungrily. I covered it with my hooves and pulled it to the safety of my side of the table.

"Get your own." I gave her a playful glare before getting another spoonful of the glorious warmth. She looked over to the food bar before dropping her head back down.

"Too far...." The grumble was barely loud enough for me to hear.

"What's wrong with you? You've been in your room all the time." A swig of water washed down the oatmeal, though the temperature of it made me shiver.

"Batponies were not made to be sailors. I feel like my intestines want to crawl out of my mouth."

"Well thanks for that imagery. And speak for yourself, I'm doing

fine. I just think the great Silver Wing is prone to seasickness.” I laughed as a particularly large wave rocked the ship and made her groan. The sound of a door opening across the hall made me look over to see Night Wing coming out of his room. It also caused a reaction from Silver. She instantly shot up straight in her chair, grabbed my mug of water, and proceeded to toss it in her face. I stared at her in shock for a full five seconds before saying anything.

“Did you ju....What was that!?” I grabbed my mug back from her and looked down into it’s empty depths. “I wasn’t done with that!” My head shot up to see her not even listening. She was too busy straightening out her hair and wings. Then she looked over to Night, only to let out a disappointed whimper. I glanced over to see the end of his tail disappearing up the stairs. I looked back when I heard the thud of Silver’s head reconnecting with the table.

“Silver. Do you have something you want to tell me?” A smirk was staring to work it’s way across my face. She looked up at me with one eye.

“Strawberry Twist, I will have you court marshaled, I swear.” The pure rage in her eyes almost made the smirk slip off my face. Almost.

“Siiiiilver. Are you sure you don’t have something to tell me?” Now she sat up to stare at me.

“Berry, if you continue this line of thought there will be consequences.” She puffed out her chest, trying to be intimidating, but her eyes looked almost fearful.

“Look Silver. The way I see it, there is only one explanation for what just happened.” I smirked even more as her brows furrowed. “You have developed more than platonic feelings for our resident bird.” The unholy hiss that left Silver’s mouth at that statement only fueled my laughter. “Is that a yes?” I gasped out between laughs. The hollow thunk of head meeting wood was all the confirmation I needed.

“If you say anything to anyone, you will not wake up the next day.” The hollow threat was muffled by the table.

"Don't worry Silver, I won't tell your future husband your secret." I laughed all the harder as she groaned audibly.

"I need help Berry." That sentence made my laugh start to slow.

"Alright, what can I do?" A few more giggles escaped, but I managed to keep it mostly quiet.

"How do you tell your superior officer, who you have known for years, that you are in love with them?" She looked up at me, her head still on the table, and the despair in her eyes washed away the last of my mirth. "He has so many things to do, and he just lost his sister. I don't want to add anything else to him right now." She looked back down at the wood. "I physically hurt for him Berry. I want to help him through this and get closer to him. But I don't know how." I nodded slowly, thinking about what she had said.

"Silver, I think you should just tell him. Holding it back isn't going to do anything but hurt you more. Besides, Night isn't going to **not** be busy any time soon. This is the least busy he has been in awhile. Try to find a good quiet time to talk to him." I scraped the last bit of oatmeal out of my bowl, wishing I had some water to wash it down.

"You think that will work?" Silver looked up to me with a hopeful look in her eye.

"I don't know much about love Silver. Other than familial love. But, not many of us on this ship do. So, that seems like a reasonable enough plan to me." Silver rolled her head back down and groaned once again.

"Your words inspire so much confidence." Silver's wings sagged down as she tried to become one with the table.

"Oh look! There's Night now." I almost fell out of my chair laughing as Silver shot up to look at the empty staircase. She gave an angry huff before throwing my bowl at my head with her hoof. The resulting thunk seemed to improve her mood as she retreated back to her room. Halfway into the hallway, she was stopped as a pony called out from the deck.

“Land Ahead!” The call made the few ponies in the galley, and even some from the crew quarters, rush up the stairs. As me and Silver squeezed up onto the top deck, we were greeted by a small sea of ponies all trying to get a look at the land ahead.

The crowd parted slightly to let Silver, and by extension me, through. Once we had reached the stairs to the helm, we both quickly ascended to see what was happening. I was expecting some snow covered wasteland, and maybe a frozen fishing village of some sort. I definitely wasn't expecting a giant hollowed out iceberg in the distance. A few ships were coming and going, all of them very worn looking. Large holes in the ice at the water level let ships enter and leave, and above that more holes let me catch a glimpse of buildings inside the hollowed out structure. Some buildings and walkways wrapped around the outside of the ice, mainly watch towers and emplacements for cannons. Tattered flags scattered around the hunk of ice wavered in the wind. It was one of these that made my heart sink. A black flag with a skull of some sort and bones crossed over it.

Author's Notes:

It has been.....Awhile, I know. Every day I have though about you guys, and this story. Life just....got away from me. Distractions and excuses to put it off. But, I managed to get something done. I'm sorry for the wait guys, I really truly am. So, I hope you enjoy this update.

[Discord](#)

Frozen Heart

Night Wing

Assorted creatures gathered on walkways as our ship parted the water through one of the gargantuan icy doorways. Griffins were the main denizens I noticed, though I spotted a few Zebras, Yaks, a couple Minotaur, and even one or two Ponies, gathered above the entrance. They were all rough looking, some more than others, and all of them watched us with careful glares. Half of them were probably wondering if we were trouble, and the other half were probably wondering if we were worth the trouble of robbing. I glared right back up at them as I snorted in annoyance. I wasn't here to start a war, nor to fight every single being in this filthy place. I was here for a specific purpose. Greenhorn had given me two pieces of information with his map. A location, and a name. Captain Dragon. I really hoped they weren't an actual Dragon.

The ship drifted slowly through the calm port waters as it approached the docks. A few braver Griffins and one large Minotaur stood on the piers, waiting to see what we were all about. "Caaaw!" I let out a call and Silver pushed through the crowd on the deck to see what I needed. 'Gather together a small landing party Silver. We are stopping here to take care of some business. And get all non-essential Ponies back below deck.' Silver was already moving before the glowing letters had faded completely from my feathers. As the crowd dispersed from the deck, the ship finally came within range of the piers. Two Ponies jumped off the side to secure ropes to the anchor points.

A dull chatter reached my ears from all around. Business had started to go back to normal around us. We didn't present any immediate threat it seemed, so most of the creatures had gone back to their daily lives. Buildings and walkways were built all along the sides of the large iceberg, including the walls. My eye followed the spiraling and crisscrossing walkways all the way up the walls until they met a large building suspended from the ceiling. Most of the chatter seemed to be coming from their, and I guessed it was some

sort of pub. As the ropes were secured to the pier the Ponies called up the all clear at the same time as Silver came back up behind me with a small group of Batponies. I glanced back to see them all wearing their old Guard armor and weapons. My wing came up to rest over my eyes as I sighed in exasperation, yet I couldn't make them remove it because we most likely needed it.

'Alright! Let's head up to that pub and ask around for a Captain Dragon.' The ship slowly rocked and creaked as our group of six made its way down the now deployed gangplank. I glared around the pier as various lowlifes glared back at us. While we had come into their port with no governmental flags flying, we also had a well cared for ship and a clean looking crew. I was also sure that most pirates didn't roam around casually in shiny armor. We stuck out like a sore thumb, and that caused an issue as soon as we got halfway down the wooden walkway.

"Hey!" A random Griffin approached us with a smirk. "You gotta pay the tax to dock here!"

'Really?' I extended a wing to write upon so he could see. He seemed slightly surprised, but didn't react otherwise. 'I see no such sign. Perhaps you should put up some signage for new comers. We won't be here long.' I folded my wing and made to walk around him.

"Listen here you mutated pigeon!" The dark red Griffin glared at me and blocked our path again. "Pay the tax, or you don't get in." I glared right back down at him and held out my wing to calm down the guards behind me. Several other Griffins and the Minotaur I noticed earlier were starting to close in on us. Typical pirate behavior.

'How much is this tax?' The Griffin smirked once more as I appeared to give in.

"Well, **normally** it's twenty gold pieces. But, uh, with your lovely attitude I think we'll take forty." Laughter echoed around us from the small group trying to block us in. A few Griffins glanced over as they passed by, but didn't stop. This must be pretty common.

‘Well then. How about a counter offer.’ I yanked my wing back and grabbed him in my magic. A quick shove down introduced his face to the ground with a resounding thud. A quick toss and splash later, one less Griffin occupied the pier. The others quickly backed away with a look of shock on their faces. ‘Anyone else?’ The crowd quickly dispersed, leaving us free to enter the icy port city.

Whispers followed us as we made our way off the wooden docks and onto the bottom layer of the city. This lower area seemed to be where most of the shops were. A shop selling rum here, one selling maps there, a couple selling shoddily made clothes over there. What you would expect of a pirate port really. I had to stop at a shop selling eye patches and pirate hats of course. Apparently losing an eye was common in piracy. “Night, you have both your eyes.” Silver tried to ruin my fun as I dropped about forty bits out of a portal onto the shop keepers counter. I doubted they used bits, but I don’t have any of whatever the pirates used, and the cashier didn’t seem to mind.

‘Silver, when in Rome.’ That statement only caused the Batponies more confusion, but I didn’t really care as I grabbed a couple eyepatches and a black captains hat with dark blue stitching. The shop keeper seemed to be drooling over my money as I levitated the articles from the racks behind him. The hat I put on, while I sent most of the eyepatches back to my room on the ship. One, that was black with gold stitching, I sent to a certain white horse I knew. The other I handed to Silver as my portals all closed. ‘Put this on.’

“Why would I put that on.” Silver had a confused glare on her face.

‘You, do you want Silver to wear this?’ I motioned to a random Batpony.

“I, uh...I don’t....Uh....” The poor stallion just stammered while trying to think of a response.

‘See, your subordinates want you to wear it. Put it on.’ I tossed it at her and turned to keep walking through the port. Once we reached the wall we took a stair case up to the next level. We slowly made our way up through the crisscrossing paths, passing through the main housing area on our way up. As we got higher up the building

started to improve slightly. They were still run down, but most of them had actual doors instead of tied together wood bits or sheets. Finally, after too many suspended bridges, we reached the level with the pub. This was a busy area it seemed, with a couple hundred beings all eating, chatting, and drinking too much. I looked at the roof of the cavern where thick chains had been drilled in and were holding up the pub. *This seems totally safe. Time to go find us a captain.*

“I’ve never seen most of these creatures.” One of the Batponies mumbled. It was my first time seeing a lot of them as well. Minotaurs, with giant hammers and axes resting beside them, drank huge mugs of.....something, while a group of tropically colored Griffins wearing leather jackets tore into a large fish carcass of some sort. A couple tables of Ponies were scattered around here and there, Yaks were being loud and rowdy, and Griffins glided around the area. A hefty female Minotaur seemed to be running the pub, taking orders from various patrons. We slowly cut our way through the crowd toward the bar, the crowd parting around us and distrustful eyes following us as we went.

“What you want?” The heavily built Minotaur asked in a brisk tone.

‘I’m looking for a certain Captain I heard was here.’ My wing extended to carry across the message. Her eyes narrowed at that.

“Order somethin or get lost.” The heifer abruptly turned and threw a large axe across the bar, embedding it in the wall between a beer keg and a Griffin who was trying to get a free drink.

‘Do you always keep an axe under the counter?’ My eyebrow was raised at the casual axe toss.

“It helps. Now order or shoo.” She walked over to retrieve her axe and glare at the Griffin before returning to glare at me instead.

‘Sure, we’ll take a mug of whatever for each of us. Surprise me.’ I opened a small portal and dropped six bits on the counter. Based on the sign behind here, six gold pieces would cover it. I hoped that bits were equal to gold pieces. The bartender got an evil look before grabbing the handles of size mugs in one giant hand. She went to

the farthest barrel and filled each mug with a black liquid.

“Order up. We’ll see how those sit with ya.” She laughed before slamming the mugs down and turning to leave.

“Chirp.” I grabbed her attention. ‘One more thing, We are looking for a Captain Dragon.’ The Minotaur looked at me with narrowed eyes.

“Finish yer drinks, then we’ll talk.” With that, she spun around and left to deal with the next customer. With no other choice, I grabbed my mug and went to sit at the nearest table. The Batponies all grabbed a mug as well and followed behind me.

“Is this stuff safe to drink?” One of them asked while stared into their mug suspiciously.

“I doubt it.” Another one responded. “Probably get twenty diseases from it, if it doesn’t outright kill you.”

“Well, this day can’t get much worse, so why not.” Silver looked adorably miserable in her eyepatch, the silver stitching matching her hair wonderfully. She threw back the mug and downed it all in one go. When it was drained, she slammed it back on the table and let out a rough sounding cough. “That burns.” The others watched her for a minute to see if she would fall over dead. When she didn’t show any immediate side effects they took that as an ok to drink theirs.

“Well, no point in living till I’m old I guess.” The guard that said that wound up bent over the table coughing after he tried to imitate Silver and drain the whole mug at once.

‘As fun as that looks, I’d rather not repeat my last drinking incident.’ A chuckled broke through my beak as the poor guard tried to recover. My eyes mainly followed the large bartender as she ran back and forth. After a good while she finally had a moment where someone wasn’t ordering something. The floor vibrated from her steps as she approached our table with a sour look in her eyes.

“It don’t look like you finished yer drinks.” The glare was directed

at me. I glanced down at my full mug before shoving it over to a random guard. His head smacked the table loudly.

“Join the Guard, they said. It’ll be **fun**, they said.” The poor stallion raised the mug to his lips and drained it in three big gulps. Then he slammed the mug down and promptly fell out of his chair. “I regret everything.” His complaining assured me he was fine as I refocused my attention on the bartender. A loud snort left her as she pulled over a chair from another nearby table.

“You the ones sailing in an unnamed ship? That’s bad luck ye know.” The Minotaur started off casually.

‘Is it? First I’ve heard of it. What would you recommend for a name?’ My eyes held an amused look at her conversation starter.

“How bout Wreckless? Or Conspicuous? You people have certainly attracted attention around here.” She motioned around the Pub. “Haven’t heard this much chatter since tha boat sank in the port last week.” A laugh came from the bartender at that. “But yeh didn’t come here fer stories. You wanted information.”

“Don’t normally share this information.” She began with a quick glance around. “However, Dragon has quite the tab they have yet to pay. This here stays between us. I wha’nt ever here.” A meaty hand lifted off the table to motion at the side of the pub opposite of us. “Them pretty birds over ther, the ones with the colors and such. They are part of Dragon’s crew. You want to find Her, you talk to them. I doubt they will cooperate easily. Good luck to ya.” With that, the heifer shoved her chair back and made for the bar again. *Her? Didn’t expect a female pirate lord. I should have gotten used to surprises by now.*

I nodded at Silver and stood up to approach the tropical Griffins across the deck. The other Batponies stood to follow but I motioned for them to stay. The one on the ground looked relieved as he fell back over. Silver and I made our way between tables, conversations stopping at every table we passed. The other patrons seemed to notice where we were headed and watched on with rapt attention. The group we were approaching hadn’t seemed to notice yet and I managed to hear bits and pieces of their conversation. I decided to

call them Macaws until I discovered their actual species.

“-ook forever to break! Those are the fun on-“ One of the male Macaws was laughing boisterously. I only caught half of what he was saying before a more feminine one slapped him with a wing, shutting him up. She was looking right at our group with an almost bored expression.

“Can we help you?” The tavern fell into hushed whispers as the female Macaw called out to us. Bags were being passed around among the patrons as they took bets on what would happen. As we got within a few feet of their table I held out my left wing, Silver stopping beside me on the right.

“That depends. Are you working for someone called Dragon?” The entire crew tensed as the glowing words scrawled across my feathers. *Yeah, these are the ones we need alright.*

“What’s it to ya!?” The male Macaw stood up abruptly, knocking his chair over. His mostly red feathers puffed up in anger as he started to advance on us.

“Easy Red. Let’s see what the little birdie has to say.” The female Macaw calmed her associate with a wave of her front claw. Her feathers and fur were mainly white, with a yellow plume on her head.

‘Red?’ I glanced between the female and the red male. ‘Seems like a lazy name.’

“He’s not named that because of his feathers. Please, sit. We aren’t so cruel as to keep our guest standing.” Two more chairs floated over in my black magic, placing themselves on the empty side of the table. “Please, help yourself.” She motioned at the half eaten fish laying in the center of the table.

‘Im full, but thank you.’ The words appeared across my breastplate as we both sat down.

“You two, and your group over at the other table, don’t seem to be the type to come here for no reason. What is your business with our

Captain?” The third Macaw finally spoke, also a female. This one was colored like a blue Macaw, mainly blue with yellow streaks here and there throughout her feathers, with black fur.

“Sharp, you know we don’t skip pleasantries. We have standards to keep.” The first female turned back to look at me. “Forgive her, she sometimes speaks out of turn. You can call me Daggers. These two are Red and Sharp. What are your names, if you would be so kind.”

‘Well, if we are using unoriginal code names, then I’m Big Bird, and this is Squawkin Chicken.’ Silver tried to maintain a straight face, but I could see she wanted to glare at me.

“How amusing. And your business with our Captain?” Daggers took a long draw from her mug as she waited for my answer.

‘I was wondering about some rumors I heard. About some raids being done on Deer villages?’ One of my eyebrows raised. ‘You know them, they seem to be the magical type. I was interested in buying some artifacts from those raids.’ The group seemed to relax at that.

“Ha! Oh yeah, them Deer are always dabblin in the arcanes and what not!” Red took a large swig of whatever he was drinking before letting out a mighty belch. “She be’s away at sea at the moment though.”

“Aye, we stayed behind for a shore-leave.” Sharp was trying to loosen a piece of meat stuck in the corner of her beak.

‘Any idea when she will be back? I am willing to pay quite handsomely.’ To further convey this, I dropped a bag of bits on the table through a portal. A few of the bits spilled out through the open top as the group looked on with wide eyes. Red reached out to grab the bag, but it fell through the table as another portal opened under it.

“We don’t know when she will be back exactly. It shouldn’t be long though.” Daggers smacked Red with a wing once more, though he was too distracted to care. He seemed to be trying to figure out where the bag went in his drunken state.

“Bu don’t ya worry none. We’ll know when she’s gettin close.” Red’s words were starting to slur slightly. “Daggers here has a special crystal that tracks the ship.” Daggers and Sharp were both glaring angrily at Red now. “Just point and goooooo!” Red passed out on the floor after taking another large gulp of drink.

“Excuse him. He starts talking nonsense when he’s drunk.” Daggers tried to cover up Red’s slip up, but it was too late. I could see them both tensing up for a fight. “Come back in a few days and we’ll let you know a more solid date.”

“Why wait?” Silver finally spoke up. “We have everything we need already.” Both of the Macaws jumped up and drew their weapons. Sharp reached around and grabbed a sword in her mouth, while Daggers stood on her hind legs and pulled out a pair of her namesake with her claws. I merely shook my head.

I grabbed the table in my magic and shoved it upwards, catching both of them under the jaw with the hard surface. Sharp fell over unconscious, or dead, right away. Daggers simply fell backwards before regaining her footing. She looked between the two of us with a glare. Evidently she didn’t like her odds of winning, so with burst of salty air she threw open her wings. She made it about three feet off the ground before four tipsy Batponies tackled her. I yanked her weapons away and handed them to Silver as the others secured Daggers’ claws in chains.

Silver walked over to check Sharp, only to shake her head when she felt for a pulse. ‘Oh well, get these two on the ship.’ I motioned for them to carry off Red and Daggers as Sharp’s body was tossed over the railing by a black aura. ‘Hold on.’ I stopped the two Bats carrying Daggers. If looks could kill....well, I would be fine. I searched the pockets of her black jacket with the end of my wing, trying to find anything crystal like. I found it in the left breast pocket, causing the Macaw to struggle as it was removed. A smooth surfaced square, devoid of any color. It wasn’t large, but it would have sold for a fortune back on earth. *Diamonds are a girls best friend I suppose.*

“You won’t get away with this! Dragon is going to cut you down when you get there.” Daggers smirked victoriously. “Your crew

doesn't stand a chance.”

‘We’ll see.’ That was all she saw before a wooden bowl smacked her in the head, knocking her unconscious. ‘Let’s get back to the ship.’ The walk back was very quiet, all conversations stopping as we walking through the streets. Apparently this hadn’t happened before, at least not with these particular Macaws. They seemed to be rather well known. No one accosted us as we walked down the pier this time. I dismissed the familiar Macaw body floating in the water as we boarded our ship once more.

As the two unconscious Macaws were taken below deck to the brig I approached the helmspony. ‘Get us moving out to sea. Our business here is concluded.’ I handed the Unicorn the crystal I had taken from Daggers. ‘Figure this thing out, and go where ever it points us.’ The chocolate Pony nodded and I turned to head down to my room. Ponies rushed around the deck, pulling ropes and securing things. I paid them no mind as I passed them. I had to go plan out an attack.

Author's Notes:

Wow! Another chapter! Lol, this one is a bit long, and I like it a lot actually. Feels good. Let me know what you think in the comments.

[Discord](#)

Painful Consequences

Night Wing

The tracking crystal had proven to be just as easy to use as Red had explained. The helmspony had come to my room and explained the process after a few hours of traveling. All one had to do was aim it around the horizon until it started glowing, then head in that direction. *Just point it and goooooo.* An avian chuckle echoed around my room as I quoted the red Macaw in my head. I had spent the night thinking of the best way to attack this Captain Dragon. Several hours of the night were spent extracting information from unwilling Macaws. We now had two Macaws who couldn't fly, and a lot more information on who we were up against.

Surprisingly, our target was in the direction of Equestria. Red was quite the talker once he had a broken wing. Apparently Dragon had wanted to try out the 'newly birthed trade routes' of Equestria. Equestria did, in fact, have **very** new trade routes. *As far as I know, nothing of high value was being traded by boat when I left. Just a waste of time for pirates.* Captain Dragon had three ships as far as our captives knew, each fully crewed. They had plenty of crew to overwhelm us, and attacking them would be a foolish idea for any other ponies in our situation. Thankfully however, I wasn't a pony.

"Caaaaaw!" I turned toward my door, waiting for it to open. Moments later Silver pushed into the room with a serious expression. 'Good morning Silver. How long have you been standing there?' I had heard her approach my door several minutes ago, but she had never knocked or left.

"I had wanted to see where you were with the plan of attack. I was simply unsure of whether I should interrupt you or not." The unusually aloof tone of voice and stiff posture caused my eyebrow to raise.

'I see.' My short response glowed dimly across my chest in the morning light. 'The plan is coming along well, though I needed to discuss it with you first.' I spun around to face my small desk, Silver

squeezing in beside me to glance at the map laid across it. 'Here is the general area we are expecting Dragon to be.' I pointed a talon at the ocean near the north west coast. 'The plan so far is to get within scouting range of this area and locate the ships exact locations. Then we bring our ships in closer when the sun goes down. You and I will take a team of Batponies over to wreak as much havoc as possible before an alarm is raised. Then, once they sound an alarm, you take the Batponies back to our ship while I finish them off.' Silver nodded along to the words appearing on me until I reached the end.

"Night, I'm not going to leave you on a hostile ship by yourself." A hoof pressed against my side as she spoke. "You're my commander and friend. I couldn't leave you."

'Exactly. I'm your commander.' My eyes narrowed as I gazed down at her. A pained expression worked it's way onto her face. 'Silver, we both know I can handle a few pirates. And even if I can't, I'll be fine. At least I will have made your job easier to finish.' A wing bridged the gap between us as I made her look up at me. 'What's the real issue here Silver? Why were you **really** waiting outside my room.' She pulled away from my wing and looked to the floor, her mouth opening and closing as she tried to speak.

"I, uh.....I wanted to talk to you." A frown worked its way across my beak at Silver's wavering voice. She was always confident, so this had to be something serious. "It's about our.....relationship." Silver looked up at me, seeming to hope I understood.

'I see. Have I been too friendly or casual? I'm sorry about the whole 'Squawkin Chicken' thing, if that's what your upset about.' The apology seemed to make Silver upset, causing me more confusion.

"No! It's not that. It's....." Silver seemed at a loss for words as she tried to express whatever was troubling her. "How do you view us Night?" That question through me for a loop.

'Us? I view us as friends Silver. We have been through a lot together, and you have helped me through much of it.' That didn't seem to be what she wanted to hear either. *I feel like I'm missing something here.*

“Do you think you could ever see us as....more?” With that, Silver’s eyes filled with hope. *Oh...Oh...* The world seemed to pause as a hopeful Silver stared up at me. I hadn’t even considered a relationship since arriving on this world. I never had the time it seemed. Between stopping monsters and running the Guard, life was always busy. But now that I wasn’t doing those things....the ability was there. My silence seemed to be a heart breaker for Silver. “I’m sorry, Night. That was out of line. I’ll go get a team together for the attack.” She turned to leave with a forlorn expression, but I couldn’t let her go like that.

“Chirp.” The small noise got her attention right before she opened the door. She turned her head see what I would say, a spark of hope igniting in her eyes. ‘Give me time to think Silver. I haven’t had thoughts of a relationship with anyone in a long time.’ I stepped forward to wrap a wing around her. ‘I’m not saying yes or no right now. Just....give me some time to think on it.’ That seemed to be enough to drain the sadness from her.

“Of course. I’m going to go get that team together now.” Silver rushed out the door before I could say anything else. *Well, that came out of nowhere.* I tossed myself onto my bed face first, my wings spread out beside me. Thoughts of relationships flew through my mind, bringing pain as they drug up memories both old and new. A sigh broke through my beak as I gazed upon my shelves tiredly. The purple egg drifted down to rest in the sheets in front of my face. I gazed into it, searching for an answer where there wasn’t one to be found. Eventually I drifted off to sleep without an answer.

“All hands on deck! Hostile ships spotted!” I was awoken by the loud shouts of ponies as they raced around the ship. Shaking my head to wake up, I quickly rolled off my bed while floating the egg back into its shelf. Then, after thinking for a second, I dropped everything on the shelves through a portal to my old room at the castle. *I really need a safer place to store my things.* I tossed on my weapons and armor as quickly as I could, wincing at the still present dents.

That done, I threw open the door and rushed up the stairs. The deck was crowded as cannons were pushed into position and loaded

while Pegasi and Batponies flew around the three large masts. The ship rocked in the somewhat rough water as my claws dug into the wood for extra stability. The helmspony looked over to me as I made my way up the stairs to see what the situation was. ‘What is the situation?’ The wind was ruffling my feathers, but the magic that let me write on them managed to keep it readable.

“We were closer to the enemy ships than we realized!” The wind picked up, trying to drown out what the helmspony said. She pointed ahead of the ship where I could barely make out a group of ships against the horizon in the early morning light. Several low rumbles reached my ears from the distant ships. “They appear to be attacking several Equestrian ships sir!” I let the Sir comment slide as my mind raced through our options.

‘Were our scouts spotted?’ Several more rumbles made them selves known, presumably cannons firing.

“No sir, the scouts were high enough to avoid detection.” The mare had to yell to be heard over the shouting on the deck and the high winds.

‘Head directly at them, we need to help those Equestrian ships.’ The mare nodded and I jumped over the railing to glide down to the deck below. The ponies below automatically cleared an area to give me a spot to land. Silver was by my side shortly after I touched down.

“What is the plan Night? We don’t have much time.” The ships on the horizon were steadily growing closer as we made our way to the front of the ship for a better view.

‘Get the team of Batponies you chose for the original plan. We can still sneak over in this low light.’ The direction we were approaching from caused the sun to be generally behind us as it rose above the horizon. Hopefully this would give us cover as we approached. Silver ran back below deck to fetch the team of ponies she had put together as I continued to monitor the ships in the distance. The cannon fire seemed to have stopped and the ships appeared to be grouping together tightly.

“We are ready Captain!” I hadn’t even noticed Silver come up behind me and her shout made my wings flare out in surprise. I looked over the group of Batponies, ten in total besides Silver, as my feathers tried to straighten themselves out from the surprise. All the ponies had their leathery wings covered by blades on the front and wore stern expressions. I knew they would gladly rush into battle for me, possibly to their doom. I simply hoped it wouldn’t come to that.

‘Very good. Stick with me and cover yourselves with the morning shadows.’ With that I waved at the helmspony to signal we were leaving. I leapt out over the water and spread my large wings to glide just above the surface. As the Batponies followed suit the shadows cast by the waves seemed to gather around them, obscuring their forms. I simply willed my feathers to show the oceans surface instead of a random nebula.

The ocean mist hit my face, pooling into droplets all across my wings and stomach. We were rapidly approaching the enemy ships and were close enough now to make out the different flags. There were five ships in total, two of which had equestrian flags and were sandwiched between the other three. The other three ships had what appeared to be a dragon skull on their flags, with two swords crossed behind it. Two of the ships were on the outside of the ship sandwich, with the third and biggest resting between the two Equestrian ships. *That must be the main ship. We should hit there first.* I looked back to where I knew Silver was and motioned at the middle ship with my head. I saw a barely noticeable nod through the shadows and turned to face forwards again.

As we got closer I could see that the three pirate ships had attached themselves to the Equestrian ships with harpoons and hooks. Ponies were being herded across the gaps on thick planks of wood as the pirates used whips to keep them moving. I saw a large Minotaur chuckling as he kicked a pony across the gap before crossing over it himself. We were approaching from the back of the ships, so we couldn’t see what was happening on the decks.

I pulled up as we got close enough to the rear of the largest ship, and gently alighted on the railing of the small rear balcony. The Batponies quietly touched down beside me and looked through the

windows into the room on the other side. It appeared to be empty, though sounds could be heard from below the deck and from the deck itself. After checking the room I opened a portal to the other side of the wall and my feathers turned black. One by one we all went through, forming a small perimeter in front of the portal. Once we were all though I nodded at the two sets of stair on the sides of the room. The Batponies quickly and quietly glided over to the opening and checked them to be sure they were clear. Then, without a sound, they all vanished into the dark depths. A few seconds later I heard a rustle, the sound of a blade cutting flesh, and a quiet gurgle as the Bats went to work clearing out the lower decks.

The door to the deck grew closer as I listened to what was happening on the other side. Shouting, grunts and cries of pain, and the occasional whip crack pierced the air. Cruel laughs from the pirates echoed around the cabin as they plundered the ponies ships. Then, through the noise, a beautiful voice reached my ears. "Get those ponies onto yer ships! We shan't waste another second in these waters!" Undoubtedly that was the Captain. "Now, tell me what I want to know Pony." A dull thud sound through the door. "Ugh, you're useless." A barely audible slicing sound was heard, and then panicked bubbling and gurgling.

Time to get this show started. I quickly pushed open the door before any more pony could be executed. The first thing a noticed what the bright red and blue Macaw in front of me, a dead pony at her feet. The deck was extremely crowded with pirates and chained down ponies. At first nothing changed, until a Griffin noticed me behind their Captain.

"Captain! Look out!" The whole crew spun around to see what the commotion was about, and very quickly I was surrounded by pointy objects on all sides. The Captain slowly turned around with a small smirk.

"Well hello thar. I certainly wasn't expecting a stowaway. Who and what are ye, and what be yer business aboard me fine vessel?" The Captain slowly walked up to me, smirking the whole way. Now she was almost pressed against me as she circled like a shark.

‘Captain Dragon I presume?’ The glowing letters follow her as she walked around me. My feathers faded from black to their normal space backdrop. The words and changing feathers caused some of the crew to start mumbling.

“Present. Ye still haven’t answered me question, and I am not known for patience.” She stopped in front of me, and her smirk disappeared into a frown as she pressed a talon against my neck.

‘You may call me Night. However, I’m afraid you won’t be saying much where your going.’ Before she could question my words, she yanked her claw back with a yelp. I noticed the end of the appendage was black with frostbite. I didn’t focus on that however as I extended my wing and swung it in a wide arc while covering it in razor sharp ice. Cries of pain rang out as blades froze and shattered, and faces and bodies were sliced open.

The crew that were sliced by my wing fell to the deck and screamed in pain as ice slowly encased them, while those whose weapons had shattered tried to rush me head on. A quick repulsive blast of magic tossed those crew members across the deck, many going into the water below. I slowly advance on Captain Dragon, who had regained her footing in the few seconds since having her claw frozen. ‘Captain Dragon. You have been charged with murder, torture, enslavement, and theft. How do you plead?’ The sound of the door opening behind me drew both our gazes.

“The ship has been cleared Night!” Silver and the other Batponies quickly formed a perimeter around me and Captain dragon. She glanced at the still fading words on my chest piece and gave me a small smile.

‘Old habits die hard.’ I shrugged off her gaze. ‘Free the ponies on this ship, and get them off of it. I’ll handle the other ships in a second.’ She looked like she wanted to say something, but ultimately decided against it and lead the other Batponies toward the chained ponies on the deck. ‘Now, where were we?’ I focused my attention back to the Macaw in front of me.

“I believe I was about to kill ye and yer crew. None resist me and live.” Dragon reached around with her head and pulled a sword out

from under her wing. She stood up onto her hind legs and dropped the sword into a waiting claw. "As much as I hate ta ruin such a handsome face, I can't wait ta run ye through." With that she leapt forward and attempted to slice through my neck. I blocked it with a swing of my wing, the sword screeching across my wings blades for a second.

Glancing across the deck I saw that Silver and the others had already got most of the ponies off. I refocused my attention on the enraged Macaw trying to decapitate me. I opened a portal under her feet and another higher above that one. As she fell through I closed them both, making her thud onto the deck. Her back arched as she tried to suck in a breath and roll away from me at the same time. "I have killed much bigger than ye bird!" Her legs trembled as she stood back up. "I have slaughtered entire tribes, toppled pirate lords, and slayed a Dragon! I shall not lose to the likes of ye!" She rushed at me, but I had had enough of her rambling. I grabbed her in a black aura and tossed her at the mast of her own ship. She hit it with a sickening crunch and a yell of pain.

I slowly advanced on her as she tried to crawl away. 'I suppose you plead guilty then. The punishment for your crimes is death.' I grabbed her neck in my magic once more, lifting her to the mast. Then, with a perverse sense of satisfaction, I used the sword she dropped to remove her head. I opened a portal to where sharp and Daggers were being held and let the head drop through. *Let them stew on that for awhile.*

I heard shouts coming from the other two pirate ships and I snorted as I looked between them. Grabbing all the hooks and harpoons with telekinesis, I ripped them out of the equestrian ships. Taking off from the deck, I first made my way to the deck of the left pirate ship. It looked as though all the crew were on the deck preparing to fire upon the Equestrian ship. *Makes my job easier.* The wind whistled by me as I angled down to impact the deck. The wood splintered from the impact and ice raced away from me, encasing all who it touched. The screams of pain and fear grew quieter and quieter as less and less pirates were alive to scream. I couldn't just destroy the ship like last time. The ponies below deck hadn't been evacuated yet. So I left the rest of the work for crew of my ship that

had just about arrived.

As our ship arrived to the left of the group of ships, I took off once more for the right pirate ship. Once more I landed, though less destructively this time, and encased the deck in ice. As the last screams died out a silence fell across the ocean. Nothing but the creaking of wood filled my ears for a moment as I stood, surrounded by icy statues. A voice interrupted the silence from my right side.

“All the ponies are off the main pirate ship, and we are currently getting the rest off the other pirate ship.” Silver looked uncomfortably at a frozen Griffin beside her, stuck in a perpetual scream. “After that we will clear this ship as well.”

‘Wonderful. Good work Silver. Tell the team good job as well. I will be on their main ship checking the cargo hold. Repair the Equestrian ships enough to return to port once you are done returning the ponies to them.’ I looked over my shoulder at her to ensure she was listening. ‘After all that is done, come find me. Let me know if anything comes up.’ Without waiting for a response I took to the air. A short glide later and I was entering the doors I had exited not long ago on the large pirate ship.

As I made my way down the stairs and through the bowels of the ship, I could see the Batponies handiwork. Griffins, Minotaurs, and a few Macaws lay on the floors randomly, all with slit throats. At the bottom most part of the ship was the cargo deck. I wasn’t disappointed by what lay within. Piles and crates of strange artifacts, presumably from raided deer tribes, lay scattered across the floor. Further in was the food and water storage, but I wasn’t interested in that. Many of the artifacts were wooden, and I could feel the power radiating around the cargo hold. I picked one up off a crate curiously, wondering if i could discern its purpose from looking at it. This particular artifact looked very well made, and had been on a small pedestal.

As I pulled it to me I heard a hollow snap. Looking around for the source of the sound, I noticed a thin wired hanging from the back of the magical object. I pulled on the wire until the end came out from behind several crates. Looking at the broken end, I heard the hiss of

a fuse burning somewhere else in the cargo hold. *Oh crap.*

Silver Wing

I sighed as I wiped blood from my blades. The last pirate ship had a few Griffins and Macaws still below deck. All the ponies had been evacuated and I had just finished clearing the last room. As I prepared to leave the lower decks, I heard a door open further down the hallway. Instantly the shadows gathered around me as I waited for someone to enter the hall. What I didn't expect was a small green Macaw to enter the hall.

"Mommy?" The baby Macaw called out into the darkness. My heart broke as it ran up to a green lump on the ground. "Mommy? Are you ok?" It shook the Macaw I had just killed a few minutes ago. When it's mother didn't respond it slumped to the ground with a whimper.

I didn't know what to do. *Why is there a child on a pirate ship?* As quiet sobs made there way through the hallway I did the only thing I could think of. The shadows fell away from me as I approached the baby Macaw. The child didn't even look up as I picked them up in my wings. They simply leaned into my fur and cried harder. *I have to report this to Night.* I raced up the stairs and onto the deck, only to be tossed back as a massive explosion obliterated the ship Night was on. *Oh crap.*

Author's Notes:

So, a lot happened in this chapter. It was also quite long. Tell me what you though of it. Good, bad, so so? Remember people, comments feed me! Sate my hunger!

[Discord](#)

Heated Discussions

Third Person

In a desolate expanse of ice and snow, a blizzard was currently raging. No sign of civilization was around for hundreds of miles in any direction. An aurora was lighting up the darkening sky over a backdrop of dark mountains in the distance. Icy chasms, death traps for any unsuspecting travelers, crisscrossed the landscape. The wind shrieked across the land, threatening to deafen anyone that dared try and listen. On a slightly raised plateau of ice, a slight increase in the blizzards activity was the only warning given before a feathered being exploded into being amid a pulse of blue and black magic. The snow and ice from the creature sudden appearance was quickly taken by the storm, as though it were never there to begin with. With a groan, the large celestial avian raised itself from the ground.

Night Wing

Ooow. One moment I was in a pirate ship, being consumed by a fiery explosion. The next, my face was pressed against a cold, hard surface, with wind tearing at my feathers. *Even the world wants to pluck me bare it seems.* I struggled to rise against the wind, trying and barely succeeding to lift myself from the ground. My eyes attempted to open, only to be forced shut by ice and snow being shoved into them. A shield flashed into existence around me, holding the elements at bay for me as I got my bearings. Oh trying to locate where I was was useless, as all I could see was the faint outline of mountains in the distance, lit by a barely perceptible aurora. *Well, this is wonderful. Dropped in the middle of absolutely nowhere. Couldn't have been a bar on a tropical island huh?* Realizing I wasn't going to get anywhere trying to locate where I was, I opened a portal to where I last remembered the ships being. As the window in reality opened before me, and I could see a deck full of ponies scrambling around in all directions, I ripped the shield and stepped through.

All eyes turned to me as wind and ice shot out across the deck

before the portal silently snapped shut. ‘What’s our status?’ I focused my gaze on the nearest pony. A cream colored earth pony carrying wooden boards.

“R-repairing the ship C-captain!” The poor pony looked as though he had seen a ghost. *Right, coming back from dying isn’t normal. Cats out of the bag now I guess. For the ones that didn’t know already anyways.*

‘How bad are the damages?’ The deck appeared to be cracked in several places, a mast was leaning very dangerously, and I could see several ponies carrying buckets of water from below deck.

“Not as bad as they could be, sir.” The earth pony seemed to be looking everywhere but me. “Most of the debris missed us, and the other ships had moved far enough away to not be much worse off.”

‘Excellent, continue your work’ The cream pony practically flew across the deck with his load of wood before disappearing blow, presumably to patch holes. A glance out over the water at the other ships confirmed what the earth pony had said. Some minor holes here and there, a torn sail or two, but nothing irreparable.

‘Has anyone seen Silver?’ I asked another pony, this one a Thestral, who seemed more happy to see me.

“Silver arrived back on our ship just after the explosion sir. She found a child Macaw child aboard one of the ships and brought it with her.” The Thestral saluted me and awaited further instructions while I thought over the situation.

‘I see. That can be dealt with later. How many were injured? Did we manage to evacuate most of the ponies?’

“Mostly minor injuries from debris launched in the explosion. A few deaths from the boarding parties. Some of the captured ponies were killed during rescue, but most were retrieved safely.”

‘Good to hear. Carry on with what you were doing, I’m going to speak with the helmspony.’ The Thestral saluted once more, to my annoyance, before running off to continue whatever he had been

doing before. As I approached the helm I saw the familiar red and purple coloration of Strawberry Twist manning the helm.

“Captain!” Strawberry saluted me, while keeping one hoof on the wheel.

“Chirp.” My eyes roamed the deck for a moment before I turned back to Strawberry. ‘Strawberry, any word on what the other equestrian ships are going to be doing?’ I glanced out at the ships that were still flying the equestrian flag.

“Yes sir, they plan on heading back to the nearest port. I believe it’s some small north western settlement called Frost Tip.” Strawberry looked down in thought for a moment. “Yeah, that’s it. Do you wish to escort them back Captain?”

‘Do they need an escort back? I don’t believe many pirates are going after Equestria yet, and it isn’t too far of a trip.’ Their ships didn’t seem to be in **too** bad of a condition. Not great, but easily able to make it to the coast port.

“I don’t believe so, no sir. They are mostly uninjured, and their ships are in well enough working order. Ours could use a few repairs as well though.”

‘Are they necessary?’ I gave him an intense stare.

“Well....” Strawberry looked a bit nervous. “I would strongly recommend them, but, they aren’t **Necessary**...”

‘Is it repairable by our own ponies?’

“I believe so. I don’t think we have enough supplies for a full repair however.”

“Then take the supplies you need from the pirate ships. They have no need of them anymore. In fact, restock all the supplies you possibly can from their ships. We will sink them after everything of value is removed.’ With that I turned to make my way down to the main deck. ‘And if you call me sir again, I’ll throw you overboard.’ With that parting message, I made my way down from the helm, and below deck. Walking into the crew area I knocked on Silver’s

door, ready to hear about the issue of the pirate child.

“Who is it!?” Silver yelled through the door.

“Caw!”

“Oh, come in Night. You might be able to help me calm down our little guest.” I pushed the door open slowly, not sure what to expect. Silver cuddling with a small green macaw definitely wasn’t it. “She has been crying since... Well, we can talk about that later. I asked Greenhorn to make her something to help her sleep, so he should have that soon.” She rubbed the back of the macaw with her wing as I shut the door behind myself.

‘And how do you want me to help?’ Other than Luna and Sapphire, kids were usually intimidated by me. Silver seemed to see the skepticism in my gaze.

“Well, It was either you or one of the other random ponies on the ship. Most of which are ex-guards. You probably have more experience with kids than half the ponies on this boat.” Silver shrugged a bit. “It might help both of you. You need to do something less stressful sometimes Night. I worry about you.” As she gazed at me sadly I was reminded of our earlier conversation.

‘I’ll try. No promises though.’ A sigh escaped my beak as I got closer to the bed and reached out a wing to touch the quietly crying green macaw chick. She didn’t turn around, but she did flinch when my wingtip first made contact. As a few seconds of rubbing her back, she relaxed into my feathers a bit. Her breathing seemed to slow a bit at the familiar touch of feather, and after a minute or two she slumped over fully into Silver’s wings.

“I have the pot-mmmm!” I quickly clamped Greenhorn’s mouth shut before he woke up the sleeping chick.

‘Terrible timing.’ A small bottle of lime green medicine floated by my head in Greenhorn’s golden magic. ‘Good attempt though. Thanks for trying to help Silver.’ Greenhorn nodded silently as I released his muzzle. Silver carefully lay the chick on the bed then made her way to the door with us. We filed out of the room and

quietly shut the door before making our way to the galley eating area.

“I used the few herbs I had on that potion...” Greenhorn grumbled as we sat down at a table. “No telling when I’ll be able to get more.”

‘Maybe the pirates will have some stowed away. We’ll be taking their supplies before we leave.’

“Hopefully, though I won’t hold out much hope.” He let out a large breath. “Thank you, Night, for helping my people. Even after how they and I treated you. I will try to be less... Difficult with you in the future. And, if I have the supplies, I will help the crew with medical issues.” It seemed as though it pained him to say that.

‘Despite the issues your people caused me, I wasn’t going to let them be slaughtered.’ A huff left me, dragging Greenhorn’s eyes from the table. ‘And who knows, you may even be useful.’ One of my wings reached out to tap the small bottle sitting beside Greenhorn, making it rock slightly. ‘You make us whatever potions we need, and I won’t charge you rent.’ Greenhorn grumbled at my small smirk and left the table, mumbling all the way out of the galley.

“I hope things calm down a bit after this.” Silver seemed to sink down in her chair a bit, though when she saw me looking she straightened back up. “As nice as it is to not be bored, I would rather not be fighting pirates every day.”

‘We shouldn’t have many issues with pirates. I imagine they will leave everyone alone after we go back and destroy their sea outpost.’

“What?” Silver leaned forward, seeming surprised. “What are you talking about?”

‘Wiping out the pirates.’ A small smile grew on my face as I imagined sinking the pirates iceberg port. “They do nothing but pillage and kill, they need to be dealt with as much as possible.’

“Night, we don’t have enough ponies to deal with them all!” She stood up now, leaning over the table. “Even **if** we managed to destroy their base of operations, we would suffer too many casualties. And they would just run and build a new port somewhere else!”

‘We won’t let them run. They wish to live like pirates, so they can die like them.’ The thoughts of casualties went through my head and I frowned. ‘As for casualties... I can do most of the work. You all can prevent the stragglers from running.’ My wing came up in front of my face, wisps of black magic peeling of it to drift into the air. ‘I’ve never really had a chance to push my magic to my limits before. This little adventure has made it clear that it’s much more powerful than I previously thought.’ I dropped my wing back down. ‘This will be a perfect opportunity to test myself.’

“Night, you’re talking about wiping out a whole town!” She put her front hooves on the table, leaning forward to stare into my eyes. “Not everyone there deserves to die! Yes, pirates do terrible things, but what about the families, or the ones who are just trying to get away from somewhere? Not everyone there is a murderer!”

I looked away as I thought about that for a moment. She was right, not everyone there rode the waves and attacked others. ‘We can spare the families then.’ My eyes met hers again. ‘Only kill the ones that deserve it.’

“And how do we do that Night? Go door to door, asking who is a murderer and who is innocent?” Her front hooves fell off the table. “You know that won’t work.”

‘Then we can-’ The words stopped forming as I thought for a solution. ‘Maybe-’ I shook my head, trying to think of a solution. ‘We can-’ *No, that won’t work either. They need to be wiped out, but I just can’t-!* “Caw!” I slammed my wing down onto the table, breaking it in half and spreading ice across it. Silver jumped back in surprise, a worried expression on her face.

“Night, what’s wrong!?”

‘I can’t think of a solution to this stupid problem!’ My claws clicked

and clattered as I paced back and forth, scattering frozen shards of broken table across the floor.

“Maybe it doesn’t need a solution!” I froze at Silver’s outburst. “Let someone else handle it Night! Their are guards still working for Equestria, they can protect the ships. Let someone else do the killing, please.” She ran forward and wrapped her hooves around my chest. “You don’t have to make the hard decisions, not this time.”

My claws dug into the wood below me, chillin the wood. I knew she was right, but I wanted, **needed**, to handle this problem. *Why do I need to?* I longed for combat, despite having just killed a ship of pirates. As I thought back to life back in Equestria I knew I didn’t have this desire back then. Then I thought of Luna and my claws dug deeper into the deck below. *Maybe Silver’s right. I don’t think I’m thinking straight.*

‘I think you’re right Silver. Once again. Thank you, for helping me keep my head’ I wrapped my wings around Silver, pulling her close. ‘You’re a good friend.’ I felt her stiffen a bit as she read the words on my chest. After a few more moments she pulled away with a sad smile.

“I’ll always be there for you Night. Please, let’s leave this pirate nonsense behind us. We have the whole ocean to explore.” She turned and started walking to the bedrooms. “I’m feeling a bit tired Night. I think I’m going to go lay down.”

I watched as she walked into the hall leading out of the galley, a small frown on my face. ‘Sleep well Silver’ I wrote out to the empty room.

The sun dropped below the waves as our ship rocked in the gentle waves. Standing on the bow of the ship, I watched the water part on the front on the ship. The equestrian ships had departed a while ago, waving and thanking the crew of our ship as we went our own way. They even showed appreciation to the Thestrals, their fear falling away after being freed from pirate cages. *Oh Luna, if only you were here to see it. Maybe it would have helped...* My eyes slowly

lifted up to the rising moon ahead of us. I had been avoiding being out at night, fearful of gazing upon its tainted surface. A tear fell into the ocean, joining with the water below.

“Sir, our course steady. The wind is with us and we should make good time.” Strawberry Twist spoke up behind me, probably saluting.

‘Stop saluting me Strawberry.’ A soft wooden thump sounded out, confirming he had indeed been saluting.

“Are you ok, Cap- uh, Night?” Soft hoofsteps followed him until he was beside me on the deck. I could see him in the corner of my eye, also staring up at the moon. When I didn’t respond, he continued talking. “I can’t pretend we all understand your pain Night. We didn’t lose a sister.” He looked down at the deck. “But we did lose someone we looked up to. Someone we had hoped could bridge the gap between us and the other ponies. We miss her as well.” Yet again, I didn’t respond. A soft sigh left him and he turned to leave. “You should speak with Princess Celestia, Night. We may not be able to understand what you’re going through, but I’m sure she can.”

A wince went through me at that. I had been neglecting Celestia, wallowing in my own misery. *I wonder if she is still up...* I turned to make my way below deck.

As I shut the door to my room, I reached out and brushed up on the mirror on the wall. Glancing at the empty shelves, I opened a portal beside them and the items I had on them before fell neatly into place. The center of the mirror swirled for a few minutes, and I frowned. *Guess she is sleeping.* I made to move my wing away, only for a giant white muzzle to suddenly replace the space background of the mirror.

“Night! I’m so glad you called! Sorry it took me so long to answer, I wasn’t sure why the mirror I had made was swirling like that.” Suddenly, she disappeared from view, only to reappear with an eyepatch over one eye. “I got your gift! Though, try to send it to my room next time.” A smirk formed on her face. “The poor noble in the court at the time was very confused when an eyepatch appeared

over his horn.” My beak twitched into a smile at Celestia wearing the eyepatch, and the thought of a very confused noble. It was quickly wiped away as the thoughts from earlier came back.

‘I’m glad your doing well Celestia.’ She stopped smiling as she noticed my expression. ‘I apologize for not speaking with you more.’

“Is everything ok Night?” Her eyes furrowed with worry as she took off the eyepatch and settled down in front of her mirror.

‘No, I’ve been thinking about Luna and you. About before.’ I sat down on the wooden boards. It was going to be a long tear filled night...

Author's Notes:

Been awhile huh?

[Discord](#)

Volcanic Wastes

Two Weeks Later

Night Wing

Standing by the helm, which was currently in use by a brown unicorn, I was observing the coast ahead of us. The past two weeks had been rather quiet, other than someone painting the name ‘Star’s Embrace’ on the side of the ship with a surprising amount of detail. It was written in dark blue paint and used extremely neat and flowing cursive. No one had stepped forward to claim responsibility, but it was obviously one of the Thestrals that went with me to the pirate port. The superstitious Minotaur bartender seemed to have made one of them nervous. It wasn’t really an issue, and it seemed to help morale a good bit, so I didn’t push the issue.

“Rock ahead, starboard side!” A pegasus called down from above the ship. The shore we were slowly approaching was still a good distance away, yet large jagged rocks protruded from the water randomly. The ship creaked as the helmspony turned left and another sharp rock seemed to glide by. Turning my gaze back to the shore, I watched smoke curl up into the sky from numerous craters dotting the mountains and valleys. Black sand made up the beach, which only lasted for a hundred feet or so before turning to dark stone and gravel. “Rock, port side!” The ship swung back to the right, narrowly missing another large rock. Smoke and ash in the air, combined with the low light of the ash-smothered sky, made spotting the dark rocks challenging at times.

An eruption of steam on the left of the boat made everyone on the deck flinch, and a plume of fire and gas suddenly belched from a midsized crater on a small mountain. We were at the southern side of the equestrian continent, far more south than any ponies were known to have gone. When Silver had suggested we explore the ocean, I had remembered the reports of fire-breathing lizards to the south of Equestria. So I instructed the crew to head south along the coast until something changed. That change had been a large

increase in volcanic activity, until the land transformed completely into what was before us. A barren volcanic landscape that seemed totally inhospitable.

Gorgeous... Another crater erupted with a distant crack and boom. *Well Silver, hope you like the heat.* I tapped the helmspony with a wing, getting his attention. ‘Once we get within flying distance, anchor the ship as far from any rocks as you can. And make sure to have plenty of ponies ready to fight fires at all times.’ The unicorn nodded and began shouting out orders. The deck was noisy with hoofsteps and wing beats as I made my way below to my room. Silver already had orders to prepare a landing party, so I simply needed to get myself ready. Surprisingly, Greenhorn had wanted to join. It wasn’t an issue, as we would be portalling over anyways, so I agreed to it.

I didn’t have much to get ready really, as I had lost my armor and blades in the explosion on the pirate ship. An unfortunate loss, but nothing terrible. *At least I didn’t lose my life.* A smile came over my beak and avian chuckling filled the hall outside at that thought.

“What are you laughing about?” A voice asked from behind me, making me jump. I turned to see a smiling Silver. “It’s good to see you in such a good mood.”

‘Just my own thoughts, nothing much.’ I pulled a piece of iron armor, made hastily by an earth pony, over my chest. It was originally made for a Thestral, but a hammer and some brute force shaped it into something that somewhat resembled my previous armor. I winced as it pinched a bit uncomfortably at my wing joint, shifting to get it into a more comfortable position. ‘Is the landing group ready?’

“Yes, we have a group of about 10 that will be coming with us, including the deer.” Her lips curled down in a frown. “Why are we bringing Greenhorn anyways? I can’t imagine him helping, and you told me that he was ordered to write reports on you.”

‘He wanted to come to see if he could get any useful herbs here. The pirates didn’t have much in the way of medicine.’ My claws scraped the floor as I turned to look at her. ‘Besides, as far as I can

tell, he hasn't actually sent any reports yet. It seems like his opinion of his bosses is a little low, for sending him away. He could be a useful ally.'

"Well, I don't like him." She grumbled, and I had to fight down a chuckle.

'You're just upset that the deer captured us without much of a fight.' She grumbled and left the room without responding, hoofsteps heading toward the stairs. I exited behind her, ready as I could be to leave for the shore. On the top deck the landing group was waiting, standing in rows as they did in the guard. *Focus on something else.* I had been communicating with Celestia more during the past two weeks, trying to help both of us move past what had happened. It was still painful to think about home though.

"Finally, been waiting long enough." Greenhorn was standing behind the group of Thestrals, looking out over the water. A few Thestrals glared at him for his comment. "I can't wait to be on dry land again. Even if it is some cursed land with no green for miles."

'Well, it will certainly be dry. Don't get your antlers in a twist, we'll be leaving shortly.' He frowned and reached up to feel his antler, getting a snort from me. "Caw!" I got the Helmspony's attention. 'Keep us from drifting too far out here. We should be back in a few days. If we aren't, head back to the nearest port without us. We'll meet you there.' At the unicorn's nod of agreement, a portal opened up above the deck. A cloud of ash billowed out of it and covered the Thestrals in front of it. The air on the other side of the rift in space was distorted with heat and contained an ominous red glow. The group nervously shuffled before I rolled my eyes and walked ahead of them. This seemed to bolster their confidence and they followed through behind me.

My eyes flinched closed as I emerged, the heat drying them nearly instantly. *Makes me glad I'm not a regular pony. This would be unbearable otherwise.* Mist formed around me as I pushed out my magic, cooling the air around the portal. Thestrals filed out of the portal as the rocks popped and fizzled around me.

"Thanks Night." Silver was the last one through, and she breathed a

sigh of relief as the cooler air around me washed over her. “Feels better here than on the ship.” We were on the edge of the shore, on the inland side. I waved a wing to the ship, letting them know we were fine. I could barely see their answering wave through the steam rising from the water’s edge.

“Chirp!” Everyone looked to me as I began giving orders. ‘We need to get away from the shore. Hopefully the volcanoes calm down inland. I can keep us cool, but I would rather conserve my energy to deal with the things that live here.’

“What lives here?” Greenhorn looked around at the black gravel and fire-spewing mountains. “This is a wasteland!”

“We had reports of fire-breathing creatures coming up from south of Equestria for years. Night seems to think they live here.” Silver glanced over at me. “Although I don’t share his strange excitement at finding the creatures, they would make useful allies.”

‘Yes, they would. However we need to be careful. I’m pretty sure they won’t welcome us warmly.’ A few Thestrals groaned at that. ‘Oh hush, it’ll be fun! Forward march, adventure awaits!’ I couldn’t help but quiver with excitement at the thought of meeting dragons. Sure, they may not be the friendliest of creatures, but they were **dragons**! They didn’t need anything else to make them cool.

A few hours later had us several miles inland. We would have flown in further, but Greenhorn wanted to stay on the ground and look for plants. Surprisingly, there were quite a few. Once we got away from the shoreline, the volcanoes seemed to settle down and plants took advantage of the mineral-rich soil, the little soil that there was anyways. It was by no means a tropical paradise, but plants pushed their way through cracks and crevice here and there. Greenhorn was collecting the majority of them, though he was leaving the bases of the plants so they could try and regrow.

“Look at this specimen! I’ve never seen anything like it...” My eyes rolled before I looked back to the rear of the group. There, I could see Greenhorn with his head stuck in a crack between rocks, his horns buried in the gravel beside his head. With a small puff of ash

he pulled his head out, carrying a strange plant that seem to glow with red light from the leaf's veins. The light pulsed, slowly getting dimmer and brighter as he held it up for a random thestral to see. "It's gorgeous, look at it!" He was practically leaning on the Thestral. "Beautiful..."

"Don't say it like that when you're touching me." The mare moved out from under Greenhorn and he hit the ground with a wheeze. Gravel scattered everywhere as he tried to get back to his feet.

"Some beings just don't appreciate herbalism..." He grumbled while making his way to me.

'Let me guess, you want me to drop off another bag in your quarters?' My eyebrow was raised as he approached. He simply nodded, his eyes not even on me as he looked for more plants. A bag levitated off his back and floated over to me, which I opened a portal under with a sigh. The bag dropped through into the Deer's room on the ship, joining two more just like it. *At this rate, he'll sink the ship with herbs before we get back.*

As he wandered off to look behind the rocks for more pleasure treasures, Strawberry came over from looking at some rocks to the side of the group. "What exactly are we looking for Sir?"

Fighting a grimace at his continued use of the word Sir, I looked around the relatively flat gravel field we were in. Other than the occasional large boulder, or ominously glowing pit, it was empty for miles ahead of us. I flinched a bit as an eruption echoed from the mountains behind us. 'I honestly don't know. Even if we don't find the creatures that live here with this excursion, Greenhorn should be kept happy for a while, and hopefully he can restock our medical supplies with all these plants.'

"Night! Come look at this." Silver had wandered ahead a short distance and was looking at a group of large boulders. Seeing nothing strange from where I was, I walked around to look at the backside, where she was staring. Strawberry and the other thestrals followed behind to see what the commotion was about. A few let out quiet gasps as deep claw marks came into view, at least an inch deep in the rock. One of the rocks seemed to be half melted and

chewed through, exposing a hollow space within. “What could have done this?” I didn’t answer her as my heart sped up with glee and I approached the hollow stone for a closer look.

It was mostly empty, looking as though something had clawed out whatever was inside. Just before I turned away, however, I noticed a small shard of a dark red mineral in a tiny crack. Curious, I pulled it out with my magic. Or I tried to, as it didn’t seem to be effected at all. Frowning, I instead balanced on one foot and reach out with a claw to pinch it between two talons. With a grunt of effort, it pulled free. ‘Any idea what this is?’ I asked the group as I held it up to look at closer. It was made of a material so dark red, it almost looked to be blood. The shard was around the size of one of my talons but weighed a surprising amount.

I turned and floated it around the group, getting head shakes all around. ‘I figured. Well, might as well save it for later.’ A quick portal later, and it sat among my little collection of items on the ship. ‘Wait, where’s Greenhorn?’ My head swiveled back a forth, trying to locate the wandering deer. Worry spread among the group as everyone realized he was not with the group. My heart began to speed up as I prepared to take off and search for him.

“Hey! Look at this amazing flower!” Greenhorn pranced around into view, levitating an orange flower with black leaves. My wing connected with my face in exasperation.

‘Alright, we’ll set up camp here.’ My eyes scanned the horizon for movement. We had left the gravel plain a few hours ago and found ourselves in a valley between what seemed to be dormant volcanoes. About an hour ago we had started hearing strange screeches echoing between the mountains. With the sun going down and reducing our dim lighting to a red glow from the various fissures in the ground, we all agreed to settle in for the night. A shallow cave seemed to be the best spot, so the thestrals were unpacking the small packs they had brought with them. Mainly containing food, the bags also had a sleeping bag for each. Though, with how hot it was, I doubted many would be using the sleeping bags.

“Greenhorn! Get back over here!” Silver’s shout echoed around the small cave as she caught the deer sneaking off to find more plants. “If you end up getting cooked alive by something out there, I’m not going to save you. Stay with the group.”

“Bu-“ The despondent deer turned to argue, but was interrupted by a glaring Silver.

“No. Sleep now, plants tomorrow.” With a huff, she turned around to set up her sleeping area. Greenhorn followed reluctantly while I rolled my eyes at his sudden high spirits. *Lavender and Healing Touch probably would have gotten along with him.* Memories of traveling with another group long ago filled my head before I shook it clear. The rumble of distance eruptions made me look down the valley before turning to join the others in the cave. Walking over to a spot near the entrance, I opened a portal and a pillow fell out for me to lie on. Sleeping bags didn’t work as well for birds, believe it or not. Not that it was cool enough to be in one anyways.

“Ow!” Everyone turned to see a thestral frantically waving his wings and front hooves at his rear end, while stumbling away from a small mound of ash. “Hot, hot, hot!” A few of the others chuckled as everyone went about their business. “Stupid ash pile...” The thestral muttered as he got back up. I chuckled quietly at his pouting before continuing to fix my sleeping spot. Soon enough, with the last of the fading light, almost everyone was laying on sleeping bags. A couple thestrals were staying up and keeping watch in the barely noticeable crimson glow. If not for the extremely volcanic nature of the area, it would have been pitch black to a normal pony. Of course, the thestrals and I wouldn’t have an issue. Greenhorn had already hit his antlers on the wall several times however. *That will never get old.* I smiled at the memory of Greenhorn grumbling in the deer language. *Hopefully we’ll make some more progress in the morning.*

Author's Notes:

Let me know if anything looks weird here. Copied and pasted it from Grammarly, and it was acting weird. Also, tell me what you thought! Good, bad,

ugly?

[Discord](#)

Fiery Cycle

Night Wing

My eyes scrunched up as a frown worked its way onto my beak. *Why am I so hot?* Yes, we were in a hellish wasteland of fire and sulphur, but normally temperatures didn't affect me this much. I tried to move my wings and reposition on my sleeping pillow, only to feel the cramping of muscles that had been pulled at weird angles. A strange pressure was on my chest, and my wings seemed to be locked to the ground. Panicking, I opened my eyes to see what was going on. Panic turned to confusion when I could see nothing but a dim silver around me. *What the...* With a small shift of my head to the left, the silver substance dropped out of my vision. Only to reveal a dark grey ear. *What in the world...* Still trying to wake up, I turned my head to see what was wrong with my left wing. thestrals were what was wrong with it. A pile of three thestral silently slept on my left wing, and I could only assume the same was true for my right one.

Carefully lifting my head, I checked the situation around the room. Greenhorn was still sleeping across the room, thankfully, but it appeared as though all the other sleeping bags were abandoned. I glanced to the cave entrance to see two thestrals standing guard, peering out into the dim red light. The light was a bit brighter than when I had gone to sleep, so I must have slept through the whole night. *Why didn't they wake me for a guard shift?* Narrowing my eyes at them, I tried to get their attention. "Chirp." As quietly as I could, I called out to the two guards. All I got in response was a slight ear twitch. "Chirp." A little louder this time, and I could see one of the guards start to turn his head only to quickly look forward again. *Oh, you little traitors.*

When the portal showing my face, half covered by silver mane, appeared in front of him, he visibly swallowed. 'Care to explain?' It was hard to fit the words on my forehead, so I did them one at a time. This slowly worded question seemed to make him more nervous. The other thestral on watch slowly stepped away from him

and stared out into the dark like nothing was amiss.

“Yes sir!” The stallion fell back on his guard trained as he snapped a salute and shouted. If I could, I would have facepalmed with my wing. *Face-winged? Just doesn't sound the same...* He winced as several groans echoed out from the pile of thestrals on top of me. The first thestral to open their eyes was on my left wing, where the poor mare woke up to a face full of hawk beak. At first she looked confused as I watched her, then it seemed to click that she was laying on me.

“Ah! Sorry Night, sir! I was- uh- we were just-!” Her mouth clamped shut and her face turned a worrying shade of red. She simply stood at attention as the rest of the pile shifted awake. With various yelps and apologies, my body emptied of thestrals until only one remained.

“Caw.” I softly but firmly called out and nudged Silver with my head. She was on my chest, so I couldn't move without dumping her on the ground.

“Wha-Night!” She jerked up and stumbled away, seeming to step on every wing joint as she did.

“Caw!” With a jerk, I yanked my wing in, covering it with my other one.

“Oh my stars! I'm so sorry!” Her hooves couldn't seem to decide whether to run forward and help, or step away further.

‘It's fine, I'm just sore.’ I pulled my wings back to my side and rolled them around a bit, trying to loosen the joints and muscles. ‘So, while not the worst way to wake up, can anyone explain?’ As much as I enjoyed cuddling with adorable thestrals, it was very unusual for them to cuddle me back. It was especially unusual for nine of them to climb on top of me without my knowledge. One might say unheard of, even.

“Well, uh, you see, it got reaaally hot last night.” One of the random thestrals started, but locked up as my head swiveled to look at him.

“You were cool!” Another thestral called out. “Uh, I was trying to cool off, and you were really cold. We all just kind of, joined in, once one went over. We thought we could wake up before you did.” The pony looked down and winced. “You were **really** comfortable though.”

With a sigh I put my wing over my face. ‘Alright, fine. I understand. Just, ask next time.’ My wing dropped away from my face as I rolled my joints again. ‘I would prefer to get in a better position next time.’ A glance outside confirmed that it was indeed getting brighter. ‘Start getting ready to continue traveling. It should be bright enough for Greenhorn to walk without killing himself soon enough.’ A few chuckles echoed out into the cave, and embarrassed faces turned away to pack up sleeping bags.

“Huh?” A drowsy deer sat up in the corner, finally awoken by the noise. “What did I miss?”

Shaking my head, I moved to take care of my pillow. In the corner of my vision I saw the thestral that had burned himself the previous night walking to the ash pile that caused the issue. *Why is there a single pile of ash in here?* It seemed strange considering all the other ash in the area was spread out evenly on the ground. My question was promptly answered when the thestral kicked the pile of black dust. Instantly the temperature in the cave skyrocketed, and the thestral fell back with a cry, holding his hoof and rolling on the ground.

“Everybody out!” Sensing the danger, Silver rushed everyone out of the cave, dragging a half-asleep Greenhorn by the antlers. Grabbing the downed thestral in my magic, I flapped my wings and shot out of the cave with him in tow. Setting the poor stallion down on the ground, I turned to see what was going on in the cave. With how shallow it was, we could all, see the pile of ashes begin to recollect themselves from the kick they have received.

‘Everybody stay back. Greenhorn, see what you can do about that burned hoof.’ Rapid hoofsteps echoed in the valley as ponies and one deer scrambled to get further from the cave and treat the injured pony. Eyes narrowing, I watched as the ashes lifted into the air and began to spin. An orange-yellow glow slowly grew from

within, filling the cave. Heat distortions wafted out, trailing up to join the smoke and ash in the air.

“Keeeeeear!” With a piercing shriek, much like my own battle cry, the light from the ashes exploded outwards before condensing into the form of a fiery bird. *A Phoenix!* The sight of the molten animal made my heart race with excitement. *Not a dragon, but, it’s probably the next best thing!* The phoenix was much smaller than I was, but that didn’t seem to deter it as it sped from the cave directly at me. My excitement turned to panic as I raised a magic shield to block it. It ignored me completely as it swerved over and past my shield, aiming for the group behind me.

“Caw!” Spinning around, I called out a warning. Looking at where the bird was going, it seemed to be locked onto the thestral that had unknowingly assaulted it twice. ‘Everybody out of the way!’ I tried to summon a wall of ice in front of the phoenix, but received a weak puff of steam instead. *What?* Shaking my head I resorted to pure magic. A black transparent shield popped into existence as a bubble over Greenhorn and the thestral. With a loud THUD the phoenix impacted it, not having time to dodge. It fell to the ground, unmoving with a crooked neck. Everyone stared at the obviously dead bird, the glow slowly fading from it.

“Yeah! Don’t mess wit-!” A random thestral began to shout, before the bird collapsed in on itself and turned back to ash. “Yeah?”

“Shut up idiot!” Another thestral smacked him.

‘Everybody move back, this thing isn’t done.’ The shield dropped and the two under it rejoined the group further back. ‘Everyone spread out a bit. No fried Thestrals today please.’ Salutes were followed by a rapid dispersal into the surrounding area. The area around the phoenix was cleared just in time. With another screech the ash erupted into fire and reformed the bird, much less dramatically than last time. This time, the phoenix seemed more interested in me. I stepped forward as it rocketed toward me, not so much flapping its wings as it was shooting fire out behind it. *I should try that. If nothing else, it looks really cool.*

Now that I was more prepared, catching the thing was easy.

Halfway to me, a black aura wrapped around it and jerked it to a stop. It struggled and hissed as I brought it closer to me. "Caw!" It jumped at the loud sound and started fighting to get free even more violently. *Poor thing is going to break a bone struggling. Not that it matters I guess. It can just reform itself.*

My right wing opened, getting its attention, though it kept struggling. 'Calm. We are not here to hurt you.' Confusion entered its eyes for a moment as it stopped. Then it shook its head and resumed trying to wiggle out. *So, that's out. Maybe talking?* "Chirp!" 'Silver, come over here.' The phoenix still struggling, Silver walked over cautiously.

"What is this thing Night?" She was low to the ground, ready to jump and take off at a moment's notice.

'This, my friend, is a phoenix.' A smile worked its way onto my beak. 'Almost as cool as a dragon. Try telling it to calm down?'

"You want me to talk to the murder bird?" An incredulous look was sent my way. The phoenix seemed to have tired itself out as it sagged in my magic, no longer fighting.

'Just try it.' My head motioned from her to the phoenix. She rolled her eyes and went along with it. Its head lifted, tired but not beaten, to watch her as she approached.

"Please, stop trying to kill us." Silver awkwardly began, making me cover my face with a wing. "We mean no harm!" I peeked through my feathers to see a confused expression on the phoenix once again. *Hmm. Alright, let's try actions instead.*

Tapping Silver with a wing, I motioned for her to back off. As she did so, I lowered the phoenix to the ground, opening a hole for its feet. Its confused look never left as it put its feet on the ground and I released it. Clearly it wasn't used to this kind of treatment. 'No one make any sudden moves.' Slowly, I lowered myself down and folded my legs under myself. "Chirrr." Its head tilted at this sound, evidently understanding the nonaggressive stance I was taking.

"Chirp!" It hopped forward a few times, testing the waters. *Progress!*

Now if only I understood bird. How ironic.

“Cooo.” A wing reached out towards it, moving slowly. No one in the valley made a sound, terrified of being cooked by one bird, or glared at by the other. The phoenix tilted its head questioningly before seeming to come to a decision. It slowly walked forward, staying low to the ground, until it came within touch distance of my wing. Slowly, ever so slowly, it stretched its head forward.

Then it pecked me, singeing off a few feathers, and took off into the air. “Chirchirchir! Chirchirchir!” It did a barrel roll, rolled a few times, then slipped up into the ash covering the sky.

“Caw!” I shouted ineffectually after it. *Yeah yeah. Laugh it up you little showoff.*

“Are you ok!?” Strawberry called out across the valley. Looking at my wing, it was only missing a couple of feathers on the wing tip. *That’ll probably make flying difficult though.*

‘Yeah, I’m fine. Let’s move on. The little psychotic chicken should be gone.’ I glared at where it disappeared. *If it comes back, I’m going to freeze one of its wings in a block of ice. See how it likes it.*

2 Hours Later

“Ok, I’m ready to leave.” A panting Greenhorn walked up beside me, dragging a sack through the gravel behind him. Another bag of herbs levitated in front of me, slinging several pieces of gravel into my side as it did so. I flinched in irritation and opened a portal under it with a snort. The bag fell through the portal with a distant THUNK.

“Ow!” A squeaky voice came through the portal, startling me into stopping. The hot and tired Thestrals behind me didn’t notice and ran into me before falling on top of each other. A sigh escaped me at the commotion before I stuck my head down in the portal, seeing who was in Greenhorn’s room. The only creature on board with that squeaky of a voice... I lifted my head, the portal following it, so I could look around easier. As my eyes scanned the room, I came face

to face with a tiny, light green, macaw. “Hello... Where did you come from?”

I flinched as she hopped on top of my head. Her head, now upside down, entered my vision again. “Is the nice bat pony lady with you?”

“Chirp!” She jerked back, confused.

‘Silver, someone wants to see you.’ I pulled my head out of the portal, the macaw coming with it.

“Weee!” The, admittedly adorable, green macaw held on for dear life as I swung around to look for Silver. I spotted her picking her way through all the thestrals laying on the ground. She shook her head at them as they unashamedly took an impromptu break. “Wow, this place is hot!” The little macaw’s beak scrunched up. “And it stinks.”

“What is it, sweetie?” Silver came up to me and stood on her back hooves to look at the child on my head. I just rolled my eyes and kept a watch out for anything approaching us.

“Being on the boat is boring. Me and mo-“ She stopped and Silver winced. “I only used to stay on the boat for a week or so. But we’ve been out here for **Years!**” My head shook as I laughed. I felt tiny claws tighten to hold on, though they didn’t tighten enough to hurt.

“Lime, you need to go back to the boat, it’s dangerous out here. I’ll be back in a couple of days.” Silver’s eyes narrowed at the edge of my vision, and Lime leaned back away from her on my head. “And what have I told you about going in other ponies’ rooms?”

“But, Mr.Green isn’t a pony...” The flimsy excuse made Silver narrow her eyes further. “Yes ma’am...” Chuckling, I stuck my head back through the portal. A despondent macaw glided down and landed outside Greenhorn’s bedroom door. There she sat and sulked with her front claws crossed over her chest. Silver’s head replaced mine as I backed away from the portal, going back to watching for danger.

“Please behave, and don’t get in anyone’s way.” Silver’s voice came through the portal, along with a mumbled agreement. “Thank you. I’ll be back soon.” She pulled her head out and the portal closed.

“Sorry about that.” A tired smile was on her face. “A boat is no place for a child.”

‘It’s fine Silver. It gave the other a break anyways.’ A distant rumble drew my gaze away from her. We were surrounded by small mounds of sand and gravel, with boiling water between them. Small, dry, sand trails cut the boiling pools apart. We were on one such trail, winding our way through the geyser field. With a swoosh of water, a bubble of steam pushed free of the water nearby and shot up into the air. ‘Get everyone ready to move again, I don’t want to stay here long. It’s too open and dangerous.’

“Everyone up! We need to find shelter before night falls!” The ponies and one deer all groaned, but got ready to move despite their exhaustion. We would have started carrying Greenhorn and just flown further inland, but the phoenix yesterday made everyone wary of the sky. *Not that the phoenix is the worst thing out here.*

We slowly made our way through the geyser field to the mountains on the other side. Volcanic activity had been increasing once again, getting closer to the conditions on the shore. Lava trailed down the hills and cliffs ahead and we had to be careful when we arrived. Carefully we picked our way through the valleys, going around or over any lava streams and pools we came across. The temperature was higher here, but not as high as on the beach to the relief of everyone.

A few miles in, we had yet to find a place to stop for the night. “I can’t go on like this much longer.” Greenhorn had long abandoned his search for plants, opting to do as little as possible instead.

‘As soon as we find a place to stop, we’ll settle in for the night.’ Despite all the desperate eyes searching for a cave, none had been found that weren’t full of lava. The ravine we were navigating seemed determined to deny us rest.

“Look! There!” Turning I saw one of the thestrals pointing a little

ways up a cliff ahead of us. It looked as though the lava around it had cooled significantly. Hopefully that meant it would be suitable for an overnight stay.

‘Strawberry, go check it out.’ I tapped the thestral on the shoulder, and he nodded before flying up. We continued approaching but waited before going up the cliff. After a minute or two, Strawberry poked his head back out.

“Looks clear! There are some weird crystals in here though.” With the all clear, or mostly clear besides weird rocks, the group took off up the cliff. I opened a portal to the entrance for Greenhorn and followed through.

‘Alright, everybody settle in for the night. Get some rest.’ At several questioning looks, I sighed. ‘Yes, you can use me to cool off again.’ I wasn’t really upset, but I had an image to uphold. ‘Show me these crystals Strawberry. And check that thestrals hoof Greenhorn. Make sure it’s still ok.’ The thestral that was burned by the phoenix wasn’t actually hurt that badly. After a few minutes, the hoof was just tender to the touch. It would probably end up blistering some though.

“Follow me sir.” Leading the way, Strawberry walked to the back of the cave. It narrowed down a bit and, judging by the patterns on the floor and walls, I guessed lava flowed through it at some point. Ducking down, Strawberry walked deeper and I followed him in. A few feet in, the walls began to change. Starting with a couple, then whole clusters, crystals began to cover the walls. It was the same bloody red crystal we had found the previous day. Further back in the tunnel, the walls transitioned to solid crystal, before ending at a solid wall of cooled lava. ‘Have you ever seen anything like this?’ Strawberry looked at me in the dark.

‘No.’ The words glowed slightly in the dark, making them easier to read. ‘Let’s head back. We can figure out more tomorrow.’

“Yes sir.” Slowly we worked our way back out of the tiny lava tube. In the main cave, everyone was getting settled for the night. As the last bit of light faded outside, and I got ready to drown in thestrals again, my head snapped to the entrance. In the distance, far off, a

shriek echoed around the mountains. It was far from the avian call of the phoenix. The thestrals shuffled nervously at the noise, and Greenhorn just snored, already asleep.

‘Keep three on watch tonight. Pay special attention to the sky.’ A thestral left the group to join the other two at the entrance already. ‘Get some rest everybody. Tomorrow may not leave room for sleep.’

Author's Notes:

How is this chapter? Remember, comments feed me! You don't want me to starve do you?

[Discord](#)

Sulphureous Attitude

Third Person

In the dim, volcanic light of the dragon lands, a small form darted between mounds of sand and gravel. Back and forth they ran, occasionally raising their head and scenting the air. Disappointed grumbles could be faintly heard every time they paused for a few seconds. Boiling water splashed as they ran through it without care, continuing in their search. Occasionally the small wings on their back would flutter as though trying to fly, however the creature only ever seemed to glide short distances.

The dim light slowly grew brighter as they approached a more volcanic area and left the geyser field behind. Entering a ravine, they scented the air once more. "Yes!" An excited whisper echoed out between the mountains, and the figure winced at the noise they had caused. For several minutes, they stayed completely still and listened for any kind of sound. When none came they quickly continued down the valley, pausing to smell the air every few seconds. Navigating between lava flows and deep pits they finally lay eyes on a small cave in the cliff wall. Drool was practically dripping from the small creature's mouth as it gazed up at the wall with longing.

Suddenly seeing movement they ducked down behind a rock. Narrowing their eyes, they spotted some strange creature they had never seen before in the cave. It was on four legs, covered in dark grey fur, and had a weird floppy tail. It didn't look very threatening, despite the small fangs, so the small form prepared to climb up to the cave and claim what was **theirs**. The plan swiftly changed when two more of the creatures joined the first. Quickly slinking back behind the rock, they decided that three against one wasn't a fair fight. Deciding on a different course of action, they backtracked down the ravine a short distance. Once the cave entrance was out of sight, they jumped onto the cliff wall and began to climb.

The small shadow slowly climber higher, careful not to dislodge any gravel with their claws. Once they were high enough to be above the entrance to the cave, they began making their way up the ravine again. Slinking around lava streams and loose stones, the process was taking far too long in their opinion. They shouldn't be sneaking around. The strange creatures should be bowing before them! Cowering, even! Despite these thoughts, they continued quietly approaching the cave.

A head cautiously poked out over the top of the entrance once they arrived above it. Looking down, they spotted the three furry things before yanking their head back as one looked up. A silent sigh escaped them as no sounds of pursuit were heard. Grabbing a piece of gravel, a tiny claw hurled it across the ravine with a loud, echoing, clatter. "What was that?" One of the things below asked the others. Momentarily surprised by understanding them, and the fact they could speak, they shook themselves free of such thoughts. Darting over the edge of the entrance while the things below were distracted, they scurried across the roof deeper into the hollow area.

Halfway in they paused and looked down in confusion. A giant bird was sprawled out on the ground below, though that was the least unusual thing about it. Its feathers were a strange color, with pinpricks of light glowing faintly across its body. Eyes squinted in more confusion as a white ball slowly crossed the bird's body, trailing dust behind it. Shaking itself free of confusion again, it continued its journey deeper. There were more of the furry creatures laying on the giant bird, so they stayed as quiet as possible. Spotting a smaller opening at the back of the cave, they raced forward and disappeared into the darkness.

A few body lengths in, they had to suppress a squeal of excitement. Crystals dotted the walls in clusters, dark red and smelling of the most delicious meat imaginable. Positively giddy, they went deeper down the tunnel, hoping against hope there were more further in. Excitement quickly turned into amazement as the walls slowly transition into solid crystal. A quiet squeak of excitement was cut short before anyone could hear. Their eyes roamed the walls, trying to decide the best spot to begin eating.

A distant shocking roar put an end to those thoughts. They knew

that sound, the sound of someone bigger who had smelled the banquet in front of them. Their happy smile turned into one of expected disappointment. Slowly spinning around, they tried to commit the sight of what they almost had to memory. A claw reached out and trailed across the glass-like walls. "Some day." The quiet statement was followed by claws sinking into the crystal and pulling out as big of a shard as they could comfortably carry. Tucking the prize under their wings, they quickly made their way out of the tunnel. Once in the main chamber, they jumped up to grab the roof again. Right as they sunk their claws in, a much closer roar sounded out, startling them enough for the crystal to slip from their wings.....

Night Wing

Sleep was stolen by a deep roar and crystalline clatter. Eyes snapping open, I tried to stand and assess the situation. Only to be reminded of the pile of thestrals on me. With a cacophony of yelps and groans, I shoved the still-awakening thestrals off with my magic. While the roar had woken them, they were still half asleep and I had no desire to wait for them to fully wake. Silver was the first to gain her senses and joined me with the three guards at the entrance.

"What's going on?" All three thestrals straightened their backs at Silver's tone.

"Something big is out there, ma'am!" The thestral that answered was looking around nervously. "It sounded close, way closer than I'm comfortable with."

'Have you seen anything?' Pearling into the ash and smoke outside, nothing strange met my eyes.

"No sir, nothing but ash and rock all night." Another answered. Scanning the sky, my eyes caught strange holes in the cave ceiling. Narrowing them, I stretched my head up higher to get a better look. Tiny holes, in sets of fours, were evenly spread in a trail across the roof. Following them I caught a glimpse of a small, blue-grey tail disappearing into the magma tube at the rear of the cave.

‘Keep watching, I think we have an uninvited guest.’ Motioning for Silver to join up with me, I started for the back of the chamber. Silver motioned for a few more thestrals to join us, and I noticed Greenhorn stumbling awake by the wall. *I guess even he can’t sleep through all this.* Slowing down as we neared the back, my head lowered to peer down the tunnel. Seeing nothing at first, I crept closer.

“Hah!” Flinching back at the yell, I didn’t react fast enough to catch the blur that leaped from the hole. Landing on my head it jumped again, shoving my head down while it soared over the group behind me. Landing by the thestrals guarding the cave it spat out a small plume of flame, startling them into falling over. Finally stopping long enough for me to get a good look at it, my suspicions as to what it was were confirmed. A small, grayish, dragon hatchling stared mockingly at our group. “You should guard your hoard better, ya Freaks! Hahaa!” The, judging by the voice, male hatchling taunted us in a distinctly non-threatening voice. Incredulous gazes followed the dragon as it prepared to jump down into the ravine outside.

Just before he committed fully to the leap, a wall of flame blocked the ravine from view. An ear-splitting roar followed, shaking dust from the ceiling. The small dragon let out a surprised hiss and changed directions, running back toward us. With a little magic on my end, he floated off the ground mid-stride. “What the- What’s going on!” The previously brave little dragon, half the size of a pony, started panicking and struggled against the black aura surrounding him.

‘Calm down, you little maniac.’ The text seemed to elicit no response other than continued struggling. A glance at Silver got an eye roll in response.

“Calm down, we aren’t going to hurt you.” She glanced outside. “I’m pretty sure we all have a bigger problem than you, brat.”

“Where are you little runt!?” A deep male voice shook the earth. “I smell you around here somewhere. Still looking to get bigger? Come on out and let me end your suffering, this is a big dragon’s world. No place for you in it!”

“You know that thing?” Silver asked the little dragon, never looking from the entrance. A long, narrow head, covered in yellow scales, leaned down into the ravine, taking up the whole exit.

“Well well, what do we have here? It’s a little far south for your kind, isn’t it?” A large red eye scanned over the group of thestrals. “And I haven’t seen one of you before.” His gaze fixed on Greenhorn. “I wonder what you taste like. A little bony, but I’m all for new foods.” The eye settled on me and the hatchling. “And aren’t you an interesting one?! So packed full of magic, you’re practically made of the stuff! Oh yes, you’ll taste wonderful. And I see you’ve already caught the runt for me!” The ‘runt’ seemed to shrink in on himself, trying to become smaller. “You should have stuck to eating frogs on the outskirts boy. Always trying to grow up and carve out a place for yourself. Where’s that gotten you now huh!? Ha!”

The head vanished from the opening with a whoosh of air. “I’ll be able to sleep for years off this meal! All I have to do is burn you out.” A dark chuckle echoed through the valley before an orange glow lit up the outside. Dropping the hatchling, I pulled everyone to the rear of the cave and threw up a black barrier at the midway point. A torrent of fire came in the next second, blocking the view of the outside world. On the other side of the transparent shield was a sea of orange and yellow.

“We’ll, we found the things you were looking for I guess!” A glare was directed at me by Silver. “Now what!?”

“Uh, guys, it’s getting kinda hot in here.” Strawberry and the other Thestrals were panting, along with Greenhorn, as far back from the barrier as they could go. The crackling of the fire died out as it receded back outside.

“Heh, easy as ev-“ The giant head ducked back into view with a grin, one that quickly turned into a frown when he noticed we were still alive. “Wait, none of you are the ones with horns. You shouldn’t be able to-“. He cut off again, eye locking on me and pupil contracting. “Ah, you.”

I stretched out a wing. ‘Yep, me. We were kinda busy dealing with

your little friend here before you interrupted.’ I returned his stare evenly, not particularly worried. We could always portal out if need be. ‘Do you want to continue trying to kill us, or would you rather talk it out?’ The eye squinted at the glowing text for a moment before another chuckle was heard.

“You **are** a strange one.” A clawed hand reached in beside the head and poked at my barrier, not hard enough to cause me much discomfort. “Strong too. In other circumstances I would be tempted to chat with you a bit. But, I’ve recently awoken from a long nap, and I am quite famished.” The arm drew back and slammed back into the barrier, shaking the ground a bit. When it didn’t break, the dragon frowned. “Why does prey have to be so stubborn sometimes.” He mumbled to himself. He drew his arm back again and punched back toward the shield.

With a glare, I opened a hole in the barrier just big enough for the claw to pass through, then closed it on the arm, locking it in place. “Wha- Release me!” The cavern shook as he braced against the cliff and pulled. “You vile creature! Your friends shall burn for this!” Fire once more filled the space in front of me.

“Is this part of your plan!?” Our resident deer shouted over the roaring of the flames.

‘Well, I was hoping to have a **peaceful** introduction to the dragons...’ My grumbling was lost in the crackling of melting stone. *This is why we can’t have nice things.* Summoning a spike of ice, I jammed it into the arm stuck before us. Or I tried to. Once again mist formed in the shape of what I wanted, but nothing more. *The air must be too dry.* Thoughts of how the environment was affecting my magic were interrupted by a drop of blood sliding down the barrier. The arm had been getting pulled and yanked on this entire time and a few scales had broken off. *Well, there’s my water I guess.*

I didn’t **need** to use ice, I could have just used a portal to sever the arm. But, while I was in this environment, I might as well experiment with my magic’s limits. The arm wasn’t just sitting still, it was grasping around for anything to crush. Thus, I need to subdue the thing first. A black aura formed around it, and I grunted at the effort of trying to grasp such a large, squirming object with

my telekinesis. Doubling down on my magic, the arm stopped moving as the aura around it got thicker. The flames outside turned a few shades lighter in response. With a flap of my wings I was on top of the arm, and with a little flexing of will the scales under my claws started creaking and cracking.

“Ah!” The flames stopped suddenly and the large head filled the entrance once more. “What are you doing!?” Ignoring him, I clenched my claws on the arm harder and focused. The scales started shattering and flying off, trailing a cold mist. The flesh below was rapidly turning blue and hard. “St-stop! Cease! You’ll regret this vermin!” Grunting at the blustering of the dragon thirty times my size, I continued, not even considering stopping. As the cold spread up the scales appendage I used less and less magic to hold it in place. After thirty seconds I stopped restricting it entirely. “Gaaaah! Please! I yield! I’ll leave you alone! You can keep the bloodstone and the runt!” Ignoring him, I watched in fascination as the stiffness of the arm seemed to spread further up the limb, closing in on the shoulder.

“Night!” My gaze snapped over to see Silver standing in front of several uncomfortable-looking thestrals. Greenhorn was looking away with a grimace. “Stop torturing them. There is no point!” Pleading eyes held my gaze for a few seconds before I yielded with a sigh. Dropping the barrier, the arm hit the ground and shattered.

“Ah! No! Wh-what did you do!?” The dragon reeled back, clutching at the stump that ended just below his shoulder. Shards of yellow scale and thawing meat covered the cave. Greenhorn retched behind me, but I ignored the group in favor of ending the dragon a bit quicker.

“Keeear!” A screech tore from my throat as I launched from the cave and dug my claws into the eye socket of the yellow behemoth.

“Aaah! Noo!” The dragon rolled away from the cave, swatting at his face with a large claw. Shields popped into existence and deflected every strike, causing them to tear rents in the scales around me. I enjoyed the feeling of digging my claws into the flesh of an enemy after so long, but Silver’s words drug me back to reality again. Growling, I concentrated on freezing the flesh around my claws. “I

won't die to the likes of you!" The scales around the eye socket were starting to crack, and the eye itself was already a bowling ball sized chunk of ice. He slammed his face down into the rocky ground, spraying gravel and molten rock everywhere. A shield blocked the blow as he started rolling across the ground, trying to dislodge me. With a gust of wind, his wings lifted us both up out of the ravine before slamming us back down on the ground. "No! I-I won't..." His words and struggles began to slow down as the ice went deeper into his skull. With a final great wheeze, he collapsed on the ground, throwing crushed rock across the mountain we had stopped on.

Holding on for a few more seconds to be sure he was dead, I pulled my claws out with a grunt of effort and some shattered ice. Out of the cave, I could finally see the dragon in all its glory. Thick yellow scales covered its body, thinner ones around the joints, and red spikes trailed down its back from the top of his head to the end of his tail. His bat-like wings had a lighter yellow membrane, fading into red on the trailing edges. He was beautiful. *If only it didn't have to end this way.* Turning away from the sight, I huffed and glided back down the mountain to the ravine.

"Get back here!" Looking down below the cave, I saw a group of thestrals chasing after the hatchling. *I totally forgot about him.* Just before I intervened one of the thestrals flew up and dropped on him, slowing him down long enough for the other to catch up and help. One of them grabbed him from behind and held his muzzle shut, just in time if the smoke that puffed out of his nose was anything to go by. Landing beside them, I shook my head at the struggling child.

"Caw!" Silver glided down from the cave and landed nearby. 'Get him to calm down, tell him we aren't going to hurt him.' Leaving that to her, I flew back up to the cave. Greenhorn was still up there, watching everything from a safe distance.

'Get back to the boat.' A portal opened in front of him. 'We'll be along shortly.' With a silent nod he walked into the portal, disappearing from sight. The portal shut with a thought, and I proceeded to the crystal tunnel before me. Hunched down, I made my way down into the earth. When the walls were completely

crystalline I stopped and thought about how to go about taking the crystals. *Bloodstone, he called it.* While I didn't know why the dragons desired it so much, it was probably a powerful bargaining chip. *Now how do I take it?*

The obvious thing to do was use a portal, but how to get it **through** the portal was the question. I couldn't just shove the portal into the wall. *Can I?* Portals weren't **sharp** normally. It would be a disaster if someone tripped and lost a leg. But maybe I could **make** them sharp. I opened a portal to a storage room on the boat with barely a thought. Moving it to the wall I pushed at it, but nothing happened. Concentrating for a movement I tried again. To my immense satisfaction, the portal sunk into the wall, leaving behind a perfect circle. Not wanting to punch a hole in the ship, I opened another portal to watch my first portal through. *Ah, portals. Magic makes everything better.* As I watched the pillar of crystal extend out of the portal I tried to guesstimate how thick the crystal was. After the pillar got around three feet long, it started to be replaced the black stone. *That's a lot of crystal.* I looked around the tunnel, which I could only assume was all made of three-foot thick crystal.

Ceasing the portal's forward movement, I closed it to cut off the tube of crystal. Without a sound the crystal was cut cleanly through. The landing was not as soundless. I had forgotten the shard we found was mysteriously heavy, and that came back to bite me at that moment. With the sound of splintering wood and rushing water, the blood-red column turned and sunk halfway through the bottom of the ship.

"What the-!?" A unicorn rushed into the room to see what the commotion was.

"Chirp." I stuck my head through the portal and winced at the damage. The unicorn just sighed before plugging the hole with a barrier.

"It's fine, just, please try not to do it again Captain. We only have so much wood." With a nod, I closed the portal. *So, where can I put all this?*

Thirty minutes later I rejoined the others outside. I had cleared out the majority of the crystal in the cave, deciding to drop it on the land I had purchased for the sister so long ago. I had never actually given it to them, always distracted with little things. I'm sure Celestia knew about it at this point anyways, it was in the land records, so it wouldn't be much of a surprise.

It seemed the little drake had calmed down in the time I was gone, thankfully, so I went ahead and opened a portal to the boat. 'Let's get back to the boat everybody. Silver, tell the hatchling he can come if he wishes. I'll give him some crystals if he does.' With a glance back at everybody I headed through. On the top deck I watched as the thestrals filed out of the portal, Silver coming out last. After a minute, a nervous hatchling scampered through after her.

Author's Notes:

What ya think? Comment and theory craft below, please! Comments feed me!

[Discord](#)

Bloody Flames

Night Wing

Wooden creaks filled the silence between two creatures staring each other down across a wooden expanse. Sloshing could be heard occasionally as the ship rocked in the water, and distant eruptions periodically rumbled through the hull. Hoofsteps could be heard wandering the deck above as ponies maintained the ship and kept it away from the various rocks in the water. A third being interrupted our staring contest with a long-suffering sigh.

“Night, how long are you going to stare at the kid?” Eyes the color of hot coals darted over to a silver-maned thestral for a split second before swinging back to the avian in front of them.

‘Until he stops being a dragon. Let me have my moment.’ I leaned closer to the dragon, him leaning back in response. ‘That’s an order.’

“What’s he saying?” The blue-grey dragon never broke eye contact, looking ready to bolt at the slightest wrong move.

“It’s not worth repeating.” Rolling my eyes at Silver spoiling the moment, I leaned back to the relief of the hatchling.

‘Ask him for his name.’ Unfortunately, the little drake couldn’t read. That meant Silver would be translating for me for the whole conversation. Silver repeated the question to the drake, though the only response was a slight narrowing of the eyes.

‘I simply want to ask you questions about dragons. Then you can go free and do whatever it is you do all day.’ I huffed at the stubbornness of the dragon.

“Well I was told I would get crystals for coming here, and I haven’t gotten any yet. Guess neither of us are going to get what we want.” He shot back at me, smoke drifting from nostrils as his arms crossed. With a loud **bang** a thin disc of red crystal fell from the

ceiling. “Ah!” Startled, he fell from his chair and darted behind it. When nothing chased him, he glanced back around it.

‘There’s your crystal. Now will you talk?’ A snort sounded out in the room. ‘Where’s the brave dragon act now?’ His chest puffed out a bit and he glared at me as Silver narrated.

“I would have been fine if Inferno didn’t show up! That idiot **always** manages to cut me off!” A smile spread across his snout. “Well, not anymore. Heh.” I cleared my throat, and he seemed to remember who exactly had solved his problem. “Uh, Torch. That’s my name.” He still hadn’t sat back in the chair, preferring to use it as a flimsy shield. “There’s no hard feelings right? I mean, that must not have been your hoard, because you just abandoned it. So, really, I didn’t do anything wro-“ Another cleared throat interrupted him. “Sorry, very sorry. Shouldn’t have tried to steal from you.”

‘Why do you want these crystals so badly?’ His gaze grew confused when that was translated.

“Wait, are you not some freaky mutated dragon?” This question was directed at Silver.

“No, I’m not a ‘freaky mutated dragon’. She leaned close and puffed air in Torch’s face. “You’ve got quite the mouth on you. I’m a Thestral, for your information. Have you never seen a pony before? This ‘Inferno’ seemed to recognize us.”

“A what? Do you come from outside the Heart!?” He came out from beside the chair, eyes bright. “What’s out there?”

“The heart? What’s that?” Silver was getting good at knowing what I was thinking. Torch opened his mouth to answer before closing it with a snap. A calculating look came into his eyes.

“That’s a dragon secret. Sorry, I couldn’t tell you without breaking dragon law.” An avian chuckle drew two sets of eyes to me.

‘From what I’ve seen, dragons don’t seem to be the type that have ‘rules’. Another disc of crystal crashed down, making me wince. *Why is this stuff so heavy? I’m going to break another hole in the hull if*

I'm not careful. Reminding myself to open the portal a **little** lower next time, I watched the greedy hatchling.

"The Bleeding Heart. That's what we dragons call the land we live in." He turned to Silver. "That's probably why Inferno knew what you were. The bigger dragons go outside the Heart sometimes."

"So you've never left this place?" Sympathy leaked through in Silver's voice. Torch just snorted a small flame and rolled his eyes.

"Nope, just me and the sky!" His chest swelled with pride. "I've been outsmarting other dragons for years."

'Just you?' A bit of sympathy started seeping into me. He eyed the crystal discs on the table before locking gazes with me. *Oh for the love of...* The pillar of bloody crystal I had portalled onto the ship earlier fell through a hole in the air. With a crash it split the table in half and dented the floor. *Not low enough...* Silver put a hoof on her head and groaned, while I winced at the thought of telling the repair pony.

Torch drooled at the massive amount of crystal, reaching a hand forward to touch it. He pulled his arm back and looked up at me. "You'll give me all this? Just for answering your questions?" Nodding my head, his eyes grew a little less guarded. "Yeah, it's just been me. Male dragons don't stick around to raise hatchlings, and the mothers only stay until the first molt." Seeing the question in my gaze, he answered before I could ask. "The first molt is when our spikes harden and our wings become strong enough to lift us. With a bit of help from our magic of course."

'I didn't see you flying much.' Silver and I both gained a bit more sympathy for the hatchling.

"My mother was killed years ago. She got too big, and the others in the area didn't appreciate the threat." A hardness came into his eyes. "Dragons don't work together very often, but when their bloodstone supply is threatened they make exceptions. Of course, while they were all down in the lowlands gloating over someone half dead, a rockslide happened to wipe them all out." A cruel gleam shone through the hardness.

Wishing to change the subject away from missing family, as it hit too close to home, I asked about the bloodstone instead. ‘You never answered my earlier question. What is so important about this substance?’ Touching the crystal pillar with my wing, I noticed Torch flinch as if he wanted to run forward and take it from me.

“You really don’t know?” He licked his scaly lips as his gaze flicked between me and the blood-colored crystal. Seeing my head shake, he continued. “Dragons need it to get bigger. Without it, it would take a hundred years just to reach our first molt. Even with the little bit I’ve managed to find over the years, I’m almost ready to molt.”

‘I see.’ It made sense, I supposed. Everyone competing for the limited supply of bloodstone. It was terrible, but definitely imaginable. ‘So the amount we found, I take it that’s an unusual amount?’

“The amount you had could probably topple the power structure of a region.” Hungry eyes stared up at me. “Even the Dragon Lord doesn’t keep that much on claw.”

‘Dragon Lord?’ I leaned forward, my interest peaked. I seemed to remember something about that from the show. The name Torch was tickling at my mind too, but I couldn’t remember why.

“Dragon Lord Scales. The biggest dragon there is.” Torch glared at the wall, seemingly looking through it. “Dragon Lord is just the title we give to the bigger dragon, though being the biggest comes with certain benefits.”

‘Such as?’ I seemed to remember the Dragon Lord had to have something in the show, but maybe it worked differently here.

“Well, there’s a reason she has ruled for millennia. No one can go against what she says. It’s part of who we are, we have to obey the biggest.” Anger flashed across his gaze.

‘I’m guessing you want to be the biggest?’ I raised an eyebrow at him and he scoffed.

“Obviously. Who doesn’t?”

‘So what’s your plan? Eat these crystals and be on your way?’ The tube of bloodstone rolled across the floor with a clatter as I shoved it. Torch jumped out of the way before narrowing his eyes at me. ‘From what I understand, that will just get you killed.’

“Then what do you suggest, stay small forever?” He stalked to where the crystal stopped, standing on all fours in front of it protectively.

‘You seem decently smart. Instead of doing it the same way as everyone else, try something else. Something unexpected.’ A ball of ice formed in front of him and dropped to the deck with a dull thud. ‘I’m guessing dragons don’t use magic for much other than flying and breathing fire?’

Torch examined the ball of ice, rubbing his claws on it before yanking them back. “What is this?” It rolled away from him with a shove.

‘Ice. I imagine you don’t have much around here.’ I chuckled at my own joke, while Silver just rolled her eyes.

“I’m listening. What do you suggest?” Curious orange eyes stared up from the ground. I deliberated in my head on what to do. The name Torch had finally brought forth some memories. I remembered that, at some point in the future, this little dragon became Lord of the dragons. While he wasn’t the most friendly in my memories, he certainly seemed better than the current leader. Also, judging by the circumstances under which he retired, it was likely he formed various laws and restrictions to keep the dragons in check.

‘How about, instead of hoarding gems and gold like your cousins, I offer you a different type of treasure?’ Torch’s eyes glowed with curiosity. Opening a portal to the small library back at the Everfree castle, I heard a shout of surprise from who I guessed was the librarian. Sticking my head through, I quickly located the flustered unicorn mare. ‘Hi there, can I get a few books on beginner magic and learning to read?’ After a moment of confusion, then another to read the words, the librarian quickly ran off into the shelves.

With a sigh I pulled my head back out. ‘Well this is totally ruining

the suspense I built up. Don't read that to him.' I glared at Silver as she read it to him. 'I'm trying to keep up a mysterious and powerful image here.' Torch just looked confused at our banter.

"Well, this is a surprise." A pink maned pony head came through the portal. "Here are your books Night. The librarian called the guards about floating bird heads in the library. I just knew it had to be you." Five thick books came through the portal, wrapped in golden light.

'Hello, Celestia.' A heavy sigh escaped me. *Well, this is where the fear and respect end.*

"Oh, who's this!?" Torch was backed against the wall, looking highly disturbed by the situation. "It's good you're making more friends Night, I worry about you sometimes." A foreleg joined the head, wrapping me in a hug. "Well, I have to get back to work. Scry me again soon!" Celestia disappeared again and the portal shut.

'Just take these.' Grumbling, I levitated them to the dragon and dropped them with a thud. 'Silver, go get Strawberry to help him start the basics of reading. I'm going to my room for the evening. Give the hatchling a place to stay if he wants it.' Torch was more interested in the books than us, and I saw him cautiously opening one as I left the room. *This is definitely a good idea*, I reassured myself.

1 Week Later

"Thank you." A much larger Torch stood on the top deck of the ship, all the previous hostility gone from his eyes. On all fours he was as tall as a pony, and his wings had increased in size to match. "You have earned yourself an ally among the dragons, Night. Equestria will have little trouble with the dragons **when** I accomplish my goals." Five books were clutched in his front claws as he prepared to depart. In a week's time he had made shocking progress in learning to read. He soaked up everything new like a sponge, hungry for all the knowledge he could attain. The entire bloodstone column had been consumed over the course of the week as well, which is what lead to his new size. After the mistake of

eating half the crystal on the first night, and waking the entire ship with the growing pains, he had slowly consumed the rest over several days.

‘Don’t get too cocky.’ An eruption in the distance drew both our gazes. ‘You sure you don’t want to stay a bit longer and get more familiar with reading?’

“You insult me.” A toothy grin spread across Torch’s face. “Besides, I haven’t completely given up on getting bigger. Unless you want to give me more bloodstone?”

‘I think I’ve helped you enough.’ Smirking I shooed him off with a wing. ‘Off you go, before you get anything else from me.’

“Are you sure you don’t want to staaaaay?” A squeaky voice came from behind us both. Eyes widening, Torch took off from the deck and started gliding away.

“Goodbye! The next time you come through, maybe you can help me with some of the bigger dragons!” A dark chuckle echoed out over the water as he shrunk toward the shore. I looked back to see a pouting Lime. She had been quite happy to have another child on the ship. Torch was not as happy about that. Lime had pestered him at every free moment, trying to get him to play with her.

‘Don’t worry Lime. I’m sure someone else will play with you.’ She huffed and walked away grumbling. *Kids.*

While we had technically fulfilled the reason for coming to the Heart in the first place, finding dragons, I wasn’t totally satisfied. I had only seen **two** this entire time. Yes, the phoenix made up for it, but I still wanted the full dragon experience. Torch had been happy to supply the location of a popular congregating point for the local dragons. Not wanting to get into a conflict again, only a small group would go. Namely, me and Silver. We would only observe, and then leave without anyone the wiser.

“Ok Night! I’m ready to go.” Hoofsteps marked Silver’s approach across the deck. Glancing back at her, I could see she had a small pack with supplies on her back along with her armor and blades.

Not that the blades would do much against a dragon, but it made everyone feel better to be armed.

‘Let’s be on our way then.’ With a burst of heat-infused ash, a portal appeared between us.

Gravel crunched under our claws and hooves as we traveled down the ravine. We had portalled back to the cave where Inferno had found us. The yellow dragon was still there, though covered in a thick layer of ash, sprawled across the mountain. Lava and dust had begun to cover his body, slowly hiding him from the world. Distant eruptions and shifting rocks were the only sounds as we made our way further east. Torch had said we were within a day’s walk, if we moved fast.

After an hour of silence, Silver decided to break it. “So, uh, Night.” She cleared her throat suddenly. I glanced at her to see she was staring down at the ground. “Do you remember, back before you-“ she snorted, a small smile forming. “-exploded, we were talking about... Relationships?” I stumbled, scattering gravel. She glanced up at the noise, looking around the area before realizing it was just me.

‘I do.’ She frowned at the short response but pushed forwards.

“Well, I was wondering if you had given it any thought.” Her gaze was locked forwards and her steps were stiff.

‘I have.’ Realizing she wasn’t looking at me, a wing reached out and tapped her. ‘I have, Silver.’

“Well, do you-“ She stopped walking and huffed. “What I mean is-“ Again she stopped. She stomped a hoof down and spun away from me. “Why is this so hard!?”

“Chirp.” A glance over her own shoulder confirmed I had her attention. ‘I’m pretty sure I can guess what you want to ask.’ We both cracked a small smile at that, and she turned back to face me. Mine died quickly, however, and hers followed. Looking at the ground, a flash of blue eyes and a tainted moon went through my

mind. ‘Silver, you are very special to me. You are one of my few close friends, and I would do almost anything for you.’ My gaze came up and locked with hers again. Hopeful eyes met mine, and I felt a little more of my heart break. ‘But not this.’ Hope drowned in a single tear, slowly cutting a trail through ash-covered fur.

“Why?” Soft and slightly broken, the word cut me like a knife.

‘Silver... I don’t think I can handle being that close to someone. Nor do I think I’m in the mental state for a relationship.’ A step forward was met with a step back. ‘Please Silver, I don’t want to hurt you. I just... can’t be that for you. Please don’t make me choose between that and our friendship.’ I couldn’t lose anyone else, but I didn’t want to get closer to anyone either.

“I-I understand.” Another tear joined the first as steam rising from the rocks. “Requesting permission to return to the ship, Sir.” Again I stepped forward to try and embrace her, but she stepped away.

‘Ok, Silver. We can talk more when I get back.’ A portal opened beside her, and she quickly ran through without another word. My gaze didn’t leave that spot even after it closed. *I hope you understand Silver.*

My mind felt a bit numb, after standing there staring at a patch of gravel for half an hour, so I shook myself from the thoughts in my head. *Focus on something else Night. What were you doing out here? Dragons! Yes, dragons. Focus on the dragons.* Taking to the sky, I abandoned all thoughts of stealth and avoiding airborne threats. Skimming the bottom of the omnipresent ash cloud, I tried to concentrate on finding the gathering spot. *Focus on the dragons.*

Author's Notes:

As painful as it was to write, this was always the plan.

So, how was it? Tell me in the comments below! I feed on comments, so theory craft and talk to your hearts content!

Discord